WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 9, NO. 8 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | DECEMBER 1998

"So much do they fear my words that they want me muzzled as they prepare to garrote me." Mumia Abu-Jamal

Support Workers Striking at Kaiser

Teresa Jennings

Several weeks ago, I answered my doorbell to a neighbor of mine. He said, "I work for Kaiser and we're on strike, do you have any work for me to do." Friends of labor, we do have work to do in learning about the United Steelworkers of America, Local 7945 against Kaiser Aluminum Corporation strike going into its third month, December 1st. And however possible, we should lend a hand to maintain the well being of our brothers and sisters in this struggle. So here is what I know taken from the internet sites of both the company and USWA. To learn more take the Fife exit (137) off I-5, as I did last Saturday, and head toward the Sound, you can speak to those working on the picket line. Well-wishers are always welcome.

The strike began the evening of September 30, 1998. On the day of the strike, union members were handed letters offering them their jobs back if they would resign the union. What we see is a patent attempt to break the Steelworkers Union. An effort that is taking place not only in Tacoma, but nationwide. Steelworkers at the Tacoma plant, one of five owned by the company, walked off the job en masse and have remained solid ever since. Of the 320 unionized workers only four have crossed the picket line to work at the plant.

"Labor relations are human relations, nothing more or less. When a man is treated like a human being, when his ability, skill, and good will are properly recognized, when his ambitions and anxieties are given due and just consideration, he is not only capable of superb loyalty, but of performing veritable miracles in production."

Kaiser management has brought in a temporary workforce, housing them in trailers inside the plant with meals and housing paid. To get this workforce Kaiser contracted with an outside employment contractor, Ohio-based International Management Assistance Corp., or IMAC, to provide replacement workers to keep its plants running while the strike is on. Outside contractors not involved in a strike are prohibited by Washington state law from supplying a firm with out-of-state temporary help. IMAC gets around the law by operating CWI, or Construction Workforce Inc., which is a solely owned subsidiary based in Washington. A lot of the cars of these replacement workers seen entering the plant are displaying out-of-state license plates. This is one of the many of the Union's complaints of Kaiser practices.

Unfair labor practices which the Local has filed with the National Labor Relations Board include: 1) Refusing to provide critical productivity information upon which the entire company's approach to bargaining was based, 2) Making a contract settlement offer contingent on not striking, in effect punishing union members for exercising their right to strike, 3) Proposing to take pension service away from employees in retaliation for going on strike, and 4) Refusing to bargain over mandatory subjects of bargaining such as safety welding and return to work protocols.

What does Kaiser have to say for itself? From its website press releases, I offer the following telling statement. President Raymond J. Milchovich, states "Kaiser's U.S. operations must adapt to the pressures of an increasingly global and competitive aluminum industry. The ultimate vehicle for job security is capital infusion for facility renewal and state-of-the-art technology. We have a sincere interest to invest in our North American facilities, however, WE WILL INVEST FOR ULTIMATE SHAREHOLDER VALUE." (9/30/98) What might Henry Kaiser himself have said in response. From his own words, "Labor relations are human relations, nothing more or less. When a man is treated like a human being, when his ability, skill, and good will are properly recognized, when his ambitions and anxieties are given due and just consideration, he is not only capable of superb loyalty, but of performing veritable miracles in production." We're sorry Henry if you are tossing and turning in your grave over a company that prizes shareholder interests as sacrosanct while treating worker interests as profane.

In a paid advertisement in the November 19, 1998 Spokane Spokesman Review, Kaiser officials whine "Our competitors also continue to improve. Industry leader Alcoa has announced it will cut costs by $1.1 billion by the end of 2000." But if we take a comparison between Alcoa and Kaiser's parent company MAXXAM over the past year, what is clear is that since the spring of 1998, the only time MAXXAM's share price dropped below Alcoa's was precisely at the time Kaiser Steelworkers went on strike. (Kaiser Aluminum is no longer listed separately.) I am sorry that WIP cannot publish the material due to the specifics of the User Agreement of the BigCharts Inc. website. In fact, 1997 was a banner year for the Tacoma Kaiser plant with the workforce setting productivity and safety records. What did the workers get for such outstanding performance-t-shirts and mugs. What did management get-10% bonuses.

Adding, injury to insult, Kaiser Management puts forth a contract proposal that would eliminate jobs 400 to start with 600-900 threatened, a contracting out clause that gives management a blank check to do however they deem "cost-effective", retiree health insurance caps, inadequate pension increases, inadequate wage increases, elimination of supplemental and local agreements and the imposition of a salaried workforce. See detail in box. If Kaiser wants to emulate the track records of

(Continued page 15)

A Plea from **WIP**

Give Us Your Social Change!

Wendy C. Ortiz

Three years ago, I walked to the downtown library to meet a group of strangers that worked on a little local newspaper. Little did I know I would be writing articles, editing, and distributing the paper you hold in your hands.

I had just graduated from Evergreen, was working a full time job I was very unhappy with, and felt like getting involved because I was no longer working nights and going to school by day. It all started at a proofreading meeting three years ago, and it can start that way for anyone who decides to devote some time to progressive local journalism.

In the coming year, we hope to initiate some changes with Works In Progress. First, we would like to see more volunteers. There are enormous numbers of creative, generous, and progressive folks who have an hour or two per month to share, and we're asking that you share it with us. This newspaper doesn't appear out of thin air; it's the work of a small, core group of people who want to publish news of progressive movements both inside and outside of our community.

Myth: WIP won't last; it's a fly-by-night.

Fact: WIP has lasted a healthy eight years. We're working on our ninth year. But it can only survive with the help of the community.

WIP could one day push past the historical twenty-four page mark that we set in April 1995. With more community input, we could broaden our goals and come out with more pages per month. We need your help.

Myth: WIP has a network of journalists, cartoonists, computer techs and others that don't need *my* help.

Fact: The truth is, we need to help *each other*. Among the various needs WIP has are the following: journalists, photographers, computer techies, proofreaders, data entry, walking distributors, driving distributors, benefit-organizers, outreach coordinators, grantwriters and researchers, label-stickers and stamp lickers, bookkeepers, ad reps, paperbox-constructers, publishing day transportation, and anything else you wanna do or learn. We are not a bunch of experts or diehard publishers or editors. We are people like you with lives, jobs, families, and we are looking for community support to make this paper *grow*.

Myth: WIP is funded by grants and wealthy benefactors.

Fact: In reality, WIP is funded solely by advertising and subscriptions. We are fortunate to have about 30 paid subscribers, from as far away as Florida and as close as Shelton. You can find us at the Seattle Public Library, and in the Olympia Timberland Library in plastic cover. We send out complimentary/trade subscriptions to publications as diverse as *Green Acre News* out of Iowa, and the Progressive Media Project, a project of the nationwide magazine *The Progressive*. We send out complimentary subscriptions to prisoners (who receive issues via Books to Prisoners, then request a free subscription); currently we subsidize sixteen (please see page xx for information on subsidizing a subscription to be sent to a prisoner). We don't have the volunteer power to research grants and gifts. We would love to add the talents of a grantwriter and benefit-organizer to our group of eclectic progressive muckrakers.

Myth: WIP is a closed clique, run by a dictator.

Fact: WIP is open to the public. We ask everyone to read our mission statement, always on page two, to determine whether or not you could contribute to this community's newspaper. WIP has spent some energy this year putting together a brochure about how to plug

(Continued page 15)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Correspondence, articles, art, and photographs are always welcome. Please, when possible, put articles on a 3.5" IBM-compatible disk (text preferred). Artwork and photos should be camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number. Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, *it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295, wip@ olywa.net

Back Issues:

A complete set of back issues is located in the library of Liberation Cafe along with a chrono-index. Back issues are also available in the Olympia Timberland Library. WIP is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Dave Campbell **Wendy Ortiz**
Megan Davis **Hali Panneton**
Frank Hoffman **Tara Perkins**
Teresa Jennings **Jeff Sowers**
Jerome Johnson **Marie Smith**
Margaret Love **Sylvia Smith**
Evelyn Montague **Pat Tassoni**

Mission Statement:

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Governing Tool:

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:

Friday, Dec. 18th

6pm at Liberation Cafe

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 22nd at 7pm
Olympia Timberland Library

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In appreciation,
Helen Mapp

Freeway Hall Association announces that from **Monday Nov. 30 through Thursday, Dec. 24**, there will be a **holiday gift and book mart**. Practical gifts at workingclass prices are featured at this annual bazaar. Ethnic gifts, calendars, toys, posters, books, gift wrapping, and shipping service available. Hours are M-F 10am to 8pm, and Sat. 11am to 4pm. The location is **New Freeway Hall**, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. (4 blocks south of S. Alaska in Seattle). For information call 206/722-2453. Wheelchair accessible.

Happy Holidays: Celebrate the holiday season with friends and colleagues. Bring a small gift to exchange with other parents. It can be something from your home you do not use or something you make. Also, bring an idea on how you simplify the holidays; make them more meaningful without spending too much money. **Tues. Dec. 1, 5:30pm at First United Methodist Church in Olympia**. Sponsored by Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, Fair Budget and parents who care. For more information call 352-9716.

Video screening and Panel Discussion: Guerilla Girls! Screening of Documentary film "Guerillas in our Midst" which charts the activities of a group of New York radicalized women artists who took on the art world's sexism and racism disguised in gorilla masks. **Tues. Dec. 1, 7-10pm**. Lecture Hall BHS-106, (across from the History Museum, upstairs from the University Bookstore), University of Washington Tacoma campus, 19th and Pacific, **downtown Tacoma**. This is a free event. For more info call 253/591-5341.

Erica Lopez reads at Red & Black Book's, Seattle. Wed. Dec. 2, 7:30pm. Tomato Rodriguez, half-Latina love goddess and heroine of last year's cult classic *Flaming Iguanas*, returns in an even more hilarious adventure of revenge on her faithless ex-girlfriend. Accompanied by Lopez's wild cartoons, *They Call Me Mad Dog* is touted as the greatest woman-behind-bars epic since *Caged Heat*. **Red & Black Books**, 432 15th Ave. E., Seattle. 206/322-READ.

Full Moon 80's Rollerskate! A benefit for Works In Progress and the Radical Alternative Media Project. **Thur. Dec. 3, 8-10pm**. Hosted by WIP and Rob, spinning classic 80's tunes. $5-7 sliding scale, includes skates. Come get your free brochure about how to get involved with WIP or RAMP! Skateland, 1200 S. Bay Road, Olympia. Call 705-2726 for info.

John Ross, author of **"Rebellion from the Roots: Indian Uprising in Chiapas", "The Annexation of Mexico: From the Aztecs to the IMF"**, a recent novel on Mexico, **"Tonatuih's People"** and a reporter of Mexico for almost 20 years for Pacific News Service will be giving a public presentation at the Evergreen state College: John Ross has a deep knowledge of Mexico, and an amazing history as an activist. **Noon, Thursday, December 3rd, Library Lobby at the Evergreen State College, entitled: "Mexico: Struggles for Justice and Democracy: 1968 to 1998"**

John Ross will analyze the 1968 student movement in Mexico, the murderous repression against it, and its impact on Mexican society from 1968 to the present. He will discuss present and future prospects in Mexico for economic and social justice, drawing on his intimate knowledge of social movements in Mexico, particularly the Zapatistas. John will also lead a discussion from 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. in Library 3500 on the state of the Left in Mexico. There will not be a formal presentation, this is primarily for people interested in doing Mexican solidarity work in Olympia. For more information call 866-6000 X6431

Sweatshops and Child Labor. A free public presentation in Honor of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. .Intended for a general audience. .Learn more about

(Continued page 13)

Delores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farmworkers of America, AFL-CIO and officer of the Feminist Majority is more recognized in alternative media than in the mainstream media.

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DECEMBER 1998

United Nation's
Declaration Of The Rights Of The Child

Each child has the right to:

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- **A name and nationality.**
- **Special care, if handicapped.**
- **Be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster.**
- **A peaceful world.**
- **Each child has the right to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or social origin.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
"Children come into this world helpless and unable to thrive without us. Our job is to love and nurture them and to teach them how to live." **Katharine C. Kersey**		**1** **1968** - National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence condemns actions of police during Democratic Convention	**2** **1859**- John Brown is hanged **1997** - USFDA okays use of radiation on red meat to kill disease-causing microbes	**3** **1995** - The U.S. Justice Department reveals African-americans outnumber whites in the nation's prisons and jails	**4** **1996** - Oly City Council cuts D.A.R.E. budget $26,800 **1997** - Yelm: 11-year-old turns in parents for growing marijuana	**5** **1994** - Christian Coalition drives former Thurston County GOP leader Fiona Buzzard to Democrats because of their intolerance
6 **1957**- Members of the AFL-CIO vote to oust the Teamsters Union on charges that the union is dominated by corrupt elements	**7** **1835**- Due to violence over abolitionist activities Jackson calls for banning antislavery publications and to prevent its mail circulation	**8** **1886**- AFL is organized **1995** - President Clinton formally notified Congress of the deployment of 1,500 troops to Bosnia	**9** **1997** - Oregon State University researchers publish study showing that excess ultraviolet rays from natural sunlight kill amphibians	**10** **1997** - Olympia officer shoots man w/ knife **1997** - Supreme Court rules prosecutors who lie when seeking arrest warrant can be sued	**11** **1997** - Internat'l Summit: developed nations agree to cut emissions of the six main "greenhouse gases" by 6 percent over next 15 years	**12** **1994** - Thurston County commissioners apply for grant on behalf of L.I.H.I. of Seattle for purchase of Fleetwood Building
13 **1996** - Seahawks Kingdome Renovation Task force recommends it be replaced with open-air, natural grass football stadium	**14** **1859**- Georgia maintains its slave population by no longer allowing wills or deeds to grant freedom to slaves after owner's death	**15** **1997** - The Pentagon's civilian panel concludes that female and male recruits should be segregated during basic training	**16** **1997** - Common Cause claims campaign contributions from timber industry helped doom proposals to cut spending for logging roads	**17** **1859**- Georgia: African-americans indicted for vagrancy can be sold **1996** - Oly City Council votes to build library on Yard Birds site	**18** **1997** - Scottish researchers who cloned Dolly the sheep report they have also created sheep clones that contain human genes	**19** **1995** - Pendleton Report is released and is critical of Police Chief John Wurner's administration. Wurner says he won't step down
20 **1996** - Owners of the Seattle Mariners agree to not sell the team if city and county officials quickly agree to their conditions	**21** **1995** - Lowry names Joe De La Cruz to state Fish and Wildlife Commission **1996** - Newt Gingrich admits that he is guilty	**22** **1995** - Chief Wurner accuses City Manager of trying to force him into early retirement in exchange for not publishing Pendleton report	**23** **1617**-English Crown institutes Virginia penal colony which is to receive habitual criminals who are exiled from their native country	**24** **1997** - Federal judge okays land swap between Weyerhaeuser and Forest Service: 4,352 acres of public land with old-growth	**25** **1837**- Fighting in Second Seminole War, Gen. Zachary Taylor defeats group of Seminoles at Okeechobee Swamp, Florida	**26** **1997** - Two women were found dead in a culvert in southeast Spokane; six other women have been killed since summer
27 **1997** - Jacinto Arias Cruz, Mayor of Acteal, Mexico, charged w/ murder: providing the weapons used to slaughter 45 villagers	**28** **1963**- Moscow: African students riot protesting student from Ghana killed by police to prevent him from marrying a Russian girl	**29** **1997** - Hong Kong begins killing fowl to stop spread of bird flu virus **1997** - Dept Prosecutor says man shot by officer may have been suicidal	**30** **1997** - Spokane police announce 2 women found dead on Dec 26th were shot; Laurie Ann Wason, 31, and Shawn Ann McClenahan, 39	**31** **1964** - 23,000 U.S. troops are stationed in south Vietnam **1997** - Michael Kennedy dies in skiing accident at Aspen	**NOVEMBER** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**JANUARY** S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Along the Color Line

George Padmore: Black Revolutionary

Dr. Manning Marable

I was invited by the London Borough of Camden to deliver a keynote address, as part of a year-long celebration of Afro-Caribbean history and culture in Britain. The neighborhood of Camden has been the home of thousands of black and Asian immigrants for many years. The focus of my lecture was an appreciation for the life and contributions of a leading figure of Pan-Africanism and black liberation, George Padmore.

Born in Trinidad in 1901, Padmore would come to personify the hopes and aspirations for black freedom throughout his native Caribbean and Africa. The English-speaking Caribbean is in many ways unique in the black world for the remarkable tradition of political intellectuals it has produced. In the six generations since the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean, there have been a series of black intellectuals whose activism and social analysis greatly shaped and defined insurgent political movements in their region and elsewhere.

Just a short list of these extraordinary figures includes Henry Sylvester Williams, born in Trinidad in 1869, educated in North America and England, and the coordinator of the first Pan-African Conference held here in London in 1900; Jamaican black nationalist and Pan-Africanist Marcus Garvey, born in 1887, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1914 which became one of the most dynamic and influential mass movements in black history; Jamaican journalist W.A. Domingo, born in 1889, who briefly edited Garvey's newspaper, *The Negro World*, and who subsequently helped to found the pro-independence Jamaican Progressive League in New York City in 1936; and Cyril V. Briggs, born in Nevis in 1887, who created the first international political organization based on revolutionary nationalism and socialism, the African Blood Brotherhood, and who later became the first major black leader of the U.S. Communist Party.

One of the greatest social theorists of the twentieth century was Trinidadian scholar-activist C.L.R. Hames, author of the acclaimed history of the Haitian revolution, *The Black Jacobins*. Others in this black radical Caribbean tradition include: Jamaican activist and writer Amy Jacques Garvey, who contributed to building the movement of Pan-Africanism; Jamaican Communist and feminist leader Claudia Jones, who fought for black people, women and workers both here and in the United States; and the great historian and Guyanese political revolutionary Walter Rodney, author of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Within this rich intellectual and political tradition stands the son of Trinidad, born with the name Malcolm Nurse, who would later be known in radical and Pan-Africanist circles throughout the world as George Padmore.

Among historians and activists through the black world, the biography of George Padmore is well known. As a university student activist in the United States in the 1920's, Padmore joined the Communist Party and quickly rose in its ranks. As head of the Negro Bureau of the Communist Trade Union International, Padmore organized an elaborate network of thousands of anti-colonial militants throughout the Caribbean and Africa during the Great Depression. In 1931, Padmore wrote *The Life and Struggles of Negro Toilers*, which championed the cause of black labor throughout the world. After breaking bitterly with the Communists over their colonial policies, Padmore returned to London with few resources. Yet from his modest apartment, he charted a course of action which would deeply influence anticolonialist movements in both Africa and the Caribbean.

Padmore established the International African Service Bureau, a network that coordinated voluminous correspondence between African and Caribbean nationalists trade unionists, editors and intellectuals. Padmore's small journal, the *International African Opinion*, became an invaluable source of information and analyses for black radicals. Padmore was the mentor and influential theoretical to an entire generation of black leadership, including Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and the charismatic Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

Black Americans must recognize that our struggle in the U.S. against racism is directly connected with the struggles of people of African descent worldwide.

It is difficult to overemphasize Padmore's crucial ideological and political role in the emergence of political nationalism and movements of independence in English-speaking Africa. C.L.R. James went so far as to assert: "It is impossible to understand the development of the revolution in the Gold Coast that brought Ghana, unless you realized from the start, the man behind [it] was Padmore."

Like all public figures active in politics, Padmore was not perfect. Like Garvey, Padmore dreamed of an independent black Africa, united around the principles of mutual cooperation and Pan-Africanism. However, his Pan-Africanist vision failed to recognize the power of British and French colonialists to coop independence movements, and to create "neocolonialism," with new black elites taking the place of white colonial elites.

After Padmore left the Communist Party, he became a bitter critic of Marxism. He argued in his 1955 book Pan Africanism or Communism that black people must be "mentally free from the dictation Europeans, regardless of their ideology." But Padmore's hatred of Communism pushed him into the arms of U.S. and British imperialism. Padmore, and his protégé Nkrumah, also failed to appreciate the importance of democracy in the development of new states in Africa. This failure ultimately contributed to the conditions leading to Nkrumah's overthrow by Ghana's military in 1966.

Despite his mistakes, Padmore committed his entire life to the ideal of black liberation. After his death in 1959, dozens of new black states in the Caribbean and Africa would enter the world stage. They owed their independence, in part, to the monumental contributions of George Padmore. Black Americans must recognize that our struggle in the U.S. against racism is directly connected with the struggles of people of African descent worldwide.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, New York City. "Along the Color Line" is distributed free of charge and regularly appears in over 325 black and progressive publications worldwide. •

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Up Front

A Ride in a Cab

Jerome Johnson

I don't often need a cab, but I did the other day. A middle-aged black woman picked me up.

"What's up, Rainbow?" she smiled. "I saw you on TV, you looked good. Where to?"

We pulled into traffic and I asked how she felt about the election results.

She waved a hand. "Well, you know. Lost a little and won a lot, way I see it."

Oh?

"Yeah. Take I-200. Now I know how hard you and that Schlect girl worked, bless your hearts. But I been thinking. Sure , we'll miss it, but what's really changed? We still have to work twice as hard to get half as far, just like before."

Aren't you concerned about the lack of opportunities, and/or more open discrimination?

She snorted and pointed to the Bronco next to us. Instead of a license plate, there was a Confederate flag on the bumper. "See that? Discrimination don't get no more open than that. I'm a black woman. I'm used to making my own opportunities, and if I don't make one I'll get one anyway because someone white will screw up and I'll take their place and keep it. They don't have to work the way we do so it's easy for them to slack. I see it every day.

"And another thing. I don't know about you, but I sure as hell am glad that I won't have to hear some white man whining about how he lost a job due to affirmative action. That tired old myth is gone. They don't have scapegoats any more. Now they have to face reality. They didn't get the job because they weren't good enough, and let 'em try to sue. We'll throw their initiative right back in their face and say, "Here's the law you wanted! DEAL with it. And it will happen because like I say, we're used to working twice as hard as they do."

But what if other states adopt similar measure? What about a federal version of I-200?

"It's scary. But we'll cope. Hell, look what we done in the 300 years, 400 years BEFORE affirmative action."

I couldn't help but grin at her weathered optimism.

"Now, that Linda Smith. I'm glad she's gone. That woman is a terror, mmm mmm mmm."

Some people think she might try for Gorton's seat next year.

"Let her! We'll beat her then, too."

What about the other issues?

"I don't like that Ref. 49. We gonna pay for that. Good thing the wage went up 'cause we'll need the money. Here we are, honey."

I thanked her and paid.

"Thank YOU, honey. You tell that Schlecht girl and everybody else at the Rainbow to just keep on doing what you're doing."

In Washington D.C., the indomitable Maxine Waters and Sheila Jackson Lee hold the conscience of the House Judiciary Committee.

In Jasper, Berry, King and Brewer claim that they lynched James Byrd over a bad dope deal, not because he was black.

And in Thurston County, the message is clear: if you commit a hate crime—like putting crosses in people's yards—you WILL be held accountable. •

Voter Turnout is like the Elephant in the Living Room

Rob Richie and Steven Hill

Pardon me, but do you see the elephant in the living room? It's standing there in the middle of the carpet, and nobody wants to talk about it. We all just tiptoe around it, year after year, pretending it's not there, hoping it will go away.

Amid all the post-election buzz about Democratic gains and the political futures of Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich, most commentators ignored this most glaring fact: fewer than two in five adult Americans participated in the 1998 elections. Some even suggested that a turnout rate of 37% was a victory of sorts, given the fact that so many states had record-low turnout in primaries this year.

Have we become a nation of electoral under-achievers? The United States now has the lowest voter turnout in the world in national elections among established democracies. The long-term implications of our plunging turnout surely are as serious as fluctuations in the stock market.

But because it is creeping up slowly, like a crippling disease, the crisis of our "political recession" generally goes unrecognized — and unfortunately may not be addressed until we are deep into a full-scale political depression.

What is the cause of this depression? There are as many opinions as pundits. But a central factor that is often overlooked is the lack of competition in most legislative races resulting from the decennial practice of redistricting.

Despite some excitement over unexpected mid-term election gains made by the Democrats this year, the fact is that 99% of incumbents won re-election. Nearly a quarter of races didn't even have two major party candidates, and fewer than one in ten races was won by a competitive margin of under 10%.

A year ago, we predicted winners and victory margins with stunning accuracy in more than four in five U.S. House races, despite not knowing anything about campaign financing or the credibility of challengers. The reason for our success is that most legislative districts tilt clearly toward one party or the other.

This imbalance is no coincidence. The district lines were drawn by legislators who pick their constituents before their constituents pick them. In 2001, each state again will draw new districts — using increasingly sophisticated computers to gerrymander "safe" seats, particularly for incumbents.

The result of redistricting is the sort of "no-choice" legislative races we experienced this year, with a direct impact on voter enthusiasm and turnout. The Center's analysis of past elections shows that, not surprisingly, voter turnout drops as the degree of competition decreases. Even when on the winning side, voters don't have a sense that their vote counts for much when their candidate always wins by a landslide.

If our political leaders have the welfare of our nation in mind, they will call for a national campaign to address low voter turnout and our nation's political depression.

That is why we support Iowa's criteria-driven redistricting process in which districts are drawn by a nonpartisan independent commission according to the public interest, not narrow political interests. Mapping technology is sufficiently inexpensive today that citizens groups and good government activists can and should be involved in the next round of redistricting in 2000-2001.

More fundamentally, states and localities should consider adoption of proportional representation voting systems. Our current "winner take all" system is a relic of the 18th century. The more modern proportional representation systems, now in use by most of the established democracies in the world, mirror a free market economy, with voters having the multiplicity of choices from across the political spectrum — a range of choice we treasure so highly as consumers.

With proportional representation, every voter experiences a close election, and far fewer votes are "wasted." A political force winning 51% of votes earns a majority, but not everything; winning 10% wins 10 percent of representation, instead of nothing. Proportional systems have a demonstrated ability to increase voter turnout by 10 to 30 percent, because voters have more choices and more voters will cast winning votes for their favorite candidates instead of the "lesser of two evils." Voters can get excited because their votes actually count.

Among many other reforms that can increase voter turnout, here are two particularly promising modifications of our voting procedures that received boosts this election:

* Mail-in-balloting: Bringing more voters out to the polls may be best achieved by bringing the polls to your mailbox. After years of using vote-by-mail for many of their local elections, Oregon voters this year gave a big thumbs up to an initiative calling for polling place elections to be replaced by vote-by- mail. Where it has been used, vote-by-mail has increased turnout because it's so convenient for voters.

* Instant Runoff Voting (IRV): Minnesota probably had the highest turnout in the nation this year, in large part due to Reform Party candidate Jesse Ventura's surprise win in the governor's race. One in eight voters said his candidacy was the reason they voted. Given the interest that can be generated by such candidates, it is important to use a system that encourages their participation without having fractured results that undermine majority rule. IRV simply allows voters to rank candidates in their order of preference. If their first choice finishes last, their vote transfers to their second choice until one candidate has a majority. By eliminating concerns about "wasting" votes on "spoiler" candidates, IRV will help make independents and third parties a more regular part of our elections — and ensure more choice for voters, as well as majority rule.

Pulling us out of our political depression will not be easy, but we must not wait. If our political leaders have the welfare of our nation in mind, they will call for a national campaign to address low voter turnout and our nation's political depression.

It's time to start talking about that elephant standing in the middle of the living room.

Rob Richie and Steven Hill are, respectively, the Executive Director and West Coast director of the Center for Voting and Democracy (www.fairvote.org) •

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Profiting from Misery During the Holidays

Jeff Sowers

Profiting from human misery. That's essentially what Wal-Mart, GAP, and many other companies do when they go into places like China, Nicaragua or Haiti to make their products. People living in desperate poverty are very vulnerable. Having no other choice, they accept sub-human treatment in order to get food for their children. Companies like Disney, Liz Claiborne and K-Mart see the panorama of human suffering in El-Salvador, Indonesia and Honduras as a grand business opportunity. Here they find people, often young women and teenagers, willing to slave away for 60, 70 and 80 hours a week, perhaps one day off per month, often breathing toxic fumes, many living in tin and cardboard shacks along open sewage canals, for a wage that will not even allow them enough to buy milk or medicine for there children

The issues of Third World sweatshops and child labor goes right to the heart of what's wrong with the direction this country has been moving in. As a large multi-national corporate alliance drives our country down the path of "free trade" and "neolibralism", workers across the world are being pitted against one another in a race toward economic misery.

The same corporations who profit from brutal exploitation vigorously resist inserting labor and environmental standards into trade agreements. For some reason protection for their factories, investments, and copyrights fits into their idea of "free trade", but protecting human beings and the environment does not. Of course, in the end, the "free trade" mantra really just amounts to the same thing as "what is profitable for the transitional corporation."

Challenging corporate abuse of human dignity and the environment is more important now than ever. There is major legislation in the wings: Fast Track and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment(MAI). We need to fight these trade agreements and insist that corporations be held to basic ethical and environmental standards no matter where they operate globally, and that these standards be written into the law.

For some reason protection for their factories, investments, and copyrights fits into their idea of "free trade", but protecting human beings and the environment does not.

One of the best ways we can do this is to alert the public to corporate behavior that is clearly wrong. The sweatshop and child labor issue is very powerful in this respect. We need to do all we can to make sure that the public is aware that human rights abuses are being perpetrated by these corporations, and things are getting worse, not better.

Just last month, after more than two years of negotiations, the Apparel Industries Partnership(AIP) formed by a White House taskforce release its preliminary agreement. While Nike, Reebok and Liz Claiborne all signed the agreement, other organizations which were part of the negotiations refused to sign. The Union of Needle Trades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) refused to sign the agreement because, among other things, it failed to include a commitment to pay a living wage.

The National Labor Committee, a leading organization working to expose sweatshop abuses, cast the agreement as a public relations scam intended to give the public the impression something is being done while the abuse continues. Even under the AIP, a 14 year old girl could be worked 60 hours a week for less than subsistence wages. That was not a standard acceptable to UNITE, the NLC, Global Exchange, and many other groups.

For this reason, the NLC is asking that those concerned for the dignity of abused and exploited workers to not let up as a result of this agreement. The corporations are hoping that the public can be lulled back to sleep. We should not let this happen.

The holiday season is the best time of year for us to remind and inform others(and ourselves) about this important issue. The NLC has been organizing the 1998 Holiday Season of Conscience. The next important date coming up in this campaign is December 10, the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Around this date the NLC is coordinating vigils at Wal-Mart stores across the nation. **Here in Olympia, we will be holding a Human Dignity Vigil at the Chehalis Wal-Mart on Saturday, December 12, 10am-Noon.** We will be meeting in front of Rainy Day records at 9am to carpool down.

Preceding this event will be a free public presentation, Sweatshops and Child Labor at the Tradition Fair Trade Café, Wednesday, December 9, 7-9pm. The forum will include several short videos, a slide presentation, a panel of experienced activists to discuss the latest developments, and information about alternatives to sweatshop products.

Please, attend these events and show your support this holiday season for the abused and exploited workers who make so many of the products many of us buy all the time. In the wake of the AIP agreement, this is a critical period. Will public awareness continue to build on the issue of sweatshops and child labor, or will the public accept the corporate rhetoric and put the issue aside? It will be up to us. •

BEYOND CHARITY

Charity is good. Anything helps. And it's not enough.

During the holidays, people become generous and extend themselves to share their goods and good feelings.

Then, in January, go back to ignoring the poor and complaining about high taxes that go to care for "loafers."

Helping out once a year is nice. What are folks supposed to do the rest of the year? Stay out of sight?

There are about 2000 people receiving public assistance in Thurston County. That's a lot of people.

The public discussion is about the causes of poverty. Some act like they believe that government programs create poverty:sort of like medicine creating disease. The private thought is that evidence of a faulty political economy is to be blamed, dismissed, forgotten.

If the many are fed, the government is safe and the wealthy can sleep at night. That's the private thought of the modern Tory - whether his name is Gingrich or Livingston.

The private thought of the liberal, hedging the bet, is to build prisons and hire more police, as Clinton is doing.

And those of us in the herd of the many know that if we look in the faces of the poor, we don't see failure or hate. We see hunger and pain. We see our brothers and sisters.

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Frank Hoffman

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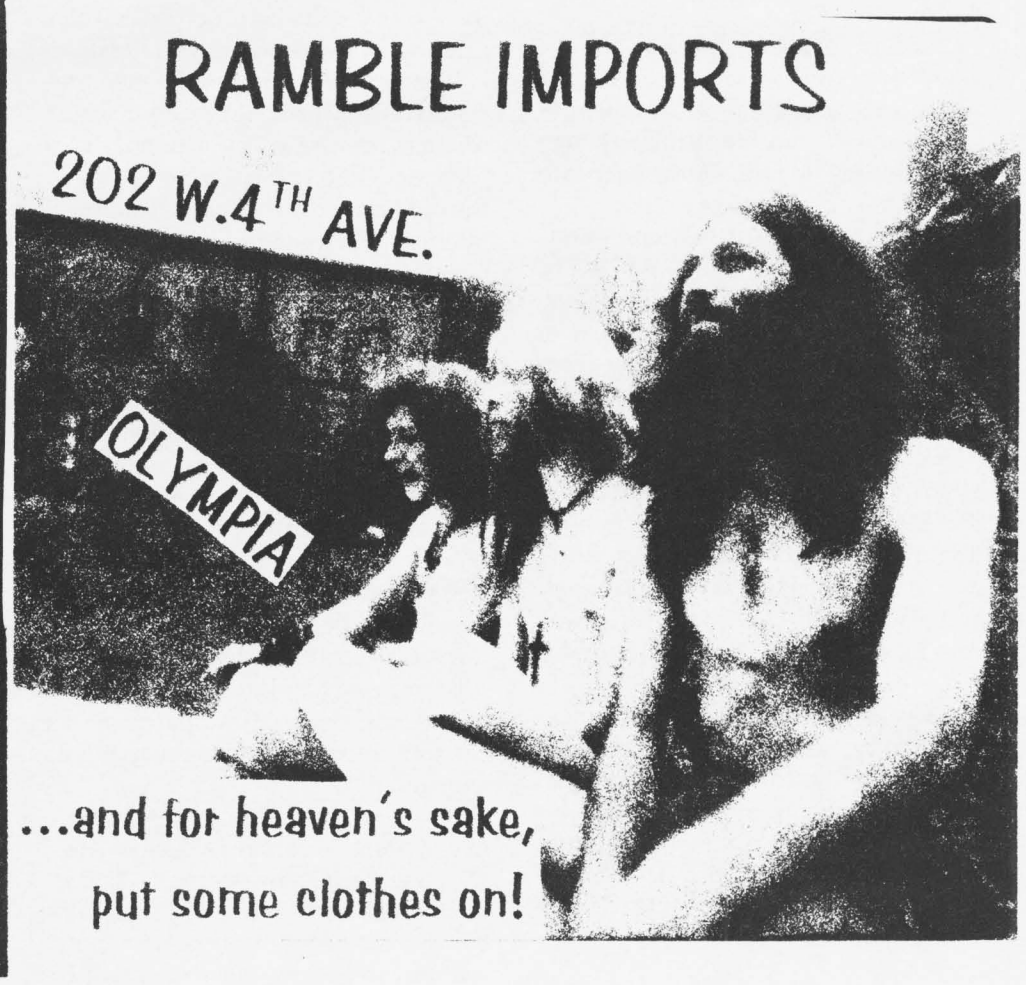

Home For Christmas

Homeless Groups Challenge Nordstrom to "Give Some Back"

WIP News Service

A group of homeless women have been spending a lot of time at the new Nordstrom at 6th and Pine in Seattle lately, and they have not been shopping for shoes.

WHEEL, the Women's Housing Equality and Enhancement League, a grassroots effort of homeless and formerly homeless women, and the Real Change homeless newspaper have publicly challenged the downtown retailer to match Seattle Mayor Schell's $500,000 commitment to end homelessness for women and children in Seattle by Christmas.

City financing for the garage was the condition Nordstrom set to buy and renovate the empty Frederick & Nelson building for their new expanded location. The new store anchors a large upscale downtown development package that includes the Pacific Place mall.

Seattle City Council recently approved a $74.5 million bond package to pay for the development, despite the fact that the garage cost just $50 million to construct.

The extra money has outraged housing activists, who see the deal as a prime example of public pork at the expense of the poor. Nor did it help when Pine Street Development, the coalition of investors behind the Pacific Place garage, paid $20 million to Nordstrom to help with renovation to the F&N Building.

"Nordstrom is a $4.3 billion corporation that uses low-income housing money to fatten their profit margin. Homeless women need that money and we want them to give some of it back."

Seattle housing activists have long opposed the use of scarce low-income housing dollars to build the five-story underground Pacific Place parking garage across the street from the new Nordstrom store. A $23 million HUD loan was secured by the Rice administration, using what turned out to be specious data to support an "urban blight" argument for the application. Another $47 million in low-interest loans was later secured from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

Nordstrom Inc. Co-President Blake Nordstrom, who is also the newly elected President of the Downtown Seattle Association, insists that this was "a different $20 million," than the housing money. Nordstrom maintains that they "did not receive a dime" of public housing money for their new store.

"We're just not buying it," said Madeline Lewis, a formerly homeless activist with Real Change and WHEEL. "Nordstrom is a $4.3 billion corporation that uses low-income housing money to fatten their profit margin. Homeless women need that money and we want them to give some of it back."

Seattle, like most American cities, has far more homeless people than available shelter beds. Current estimates of Seattle's homeless usually number about 5,500, with just under 2,400 available beds. This October's one night count of homeless sleeping outside found 784 people bedded down on Seattle's streets. The count is limited to the downtown area, the University District, and portions of Capitol Hill.

Mayor Paul Schell agrees that more emergency services are needed for both men and women, and pushed a half-million dollar package through City Council to begin funding an expanded effort targeting women and children. Yet, the Mayor agrees that this falls far short of the need, and has called upon the private sector to supplement the City's efforts.

"Our group is one-hundred percent behind the Mayor's initiative, and Schell has told me personally that he'd be happy to accept Nordstrom's money," said WHEEL member Anitra Freeman. "Nordstrom has made themselves a leader in the local business community, and leadership has responsibilities."

Real Change and WHEEL's "Home for Christmas" campaign consists of weekly leafletting at the downtown Nordstrom store to urge shoppers to support their request. They are asking other organizations to endorse and help with their campaign. Recent endorsers include Taxpayers Against the Nordstrom Garage and Seattle NOW.

Public response to the leafletters request to contact Nordstrom has been overwhelmingly positive. The groups plan on escalating their campaign over the holiday season to include "shop-ins" and other more disruptive tactics.

WHEEL and Real Change met with Blake Nordstrom in September to discuss their proposal. Nordstrom's position is that the downtown retailer did not use any public housing money, and that they are already engaged in helping alleviate poverty in Seattle.

One example of this is the Stewart Court affordable housing project Nordstrom is developing with Housing Resources Group of Seattle. Nordstrom and Clise Properties will invest $1.25 million to create 65 units of housing for those earning between $20,000 and $25,000 annually.

Nordstrom and Clise properties agreed to develop the housing at 7th and Olive in exchange for a zoning variance that will allow construction of an $80 million 25-story office tower that will house Nordstrom corporate headquarters.

Since Real Change and WHEEL began their weekly leafletting campaign, Blake Nordstrom has refused to follow up on his agreement to meet again to discuss how the needs of homeless women might be met.

"At this point, we're basically waging a pressure campaign," said Madeline Lewis. "Nordstrom has an opportunity to show some leadership in this community that we can all respect. But if they don't respond to our challenge, we're prepared to make things as tough for them as we can during the holiday shopping season. Downtown growth needs to include all of us." •

Here's how you can help:

Urge Nordstrom Inc. to take the lead in private sector matches of the Mayor's $500,000 pledge to end homelessness for women and children in Seattle by Christmas. Ask Nordstrom to invest in the City that invested in them by contacting them at:

Nordstrom Family, Suite 500
501 Pine St.
Seattle, WA 98121
(206) 628-2111
fax: (206) 628-1935
npta@nordstrom.com

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Mumia Abu-Jamal Needs Fair Trial

WIP News Service

According to Mumia, he was driving a cab through a rundown district of bars in Philadelphia, when he saw his younger brother, William Cook, being beaten by police officer Daniel Faulkner. Authorities acknowledge the fact that Faulkner was hitting Cook with a flashlight, but say Cook struck the officer first, after being stopped for going the wrong way on a one-way street. Prosecutors say Mumia shot Faulkner in the back, then the officer returned fire and wounded Mumia in the midsection, and then Mumia stood over the officer and shot him in the head.

Mumia's supporters believe that the real killer of police officer, David Faulkner escaped the night of the shooting, and Mumia was set up because of his past involvement with the Black Panther Party in the 60's.

Evidence of Mumia's Innocence

* Anthony Jackson, Abu-Jamal's trial lawyer, admitted on the stand that his work had been inadequate and that he failed to call witnesses who could have bolstered his client's claims and testified to his good character. But he complained that with a total of only about $150 to hire an investigator, he could interview only two witnesses, compared to 150 interviewed by the police.

* Sworn testimony revealed that witness coercion was routinely practiced by the police as they pursued their investigation against Jamal. In 1995, eyewitness William Singletary testified that police repeatedly tore up his initial statement--that the shooter, not Jamal, ran away from the scene--until he wrote something acceptable to them.

*Cynthia White, was someone no other witness even reported seeing at the site. In return for her testimony that Jamal shot Faulkner, White was allowed to continue to work the streets as a prostitute for years, apparently with police protection. When Jamal's legal team sought to find her for recent hearings for a new trial, the prosecution declared that she was dead. To buttress this claim they produced a death certificate for a women in another state with a different name, whose body had been cremated, and whose finger print code did not match Cynthia White's. In a 1997 hearing, another former prostitute, Pamela Jenkins, who was a friend of White at the time, testified that White was acting as a police informant, a fact not given to the defense, and that she had testified only after the police had threatened her life.

* Another former prostitute, Veronica Jones, courageously came forward to testify that she had also been coerced into changing her initial true eyewitness account that two men had fled the scene of the killing; again, not Jamal. To anyone familiar with the notorious practices of the Philadelphia Police Department, this pattern of police misconduct is not unique to Jamal's case.

* Another witness, cabdriver Robert Chobert, told police that on the night of the shooting, a man much larger than Abu-Jamal had stood over Faulkner and fired shots then ran away. Chobert first reported to police that the shooter was 225 pounds and "ran away" from the scene. This couldn't have been Jamal, who weighed 170 pounds and was found by the police sitting on a curb at the scene of the shooting, bleeding profusely from a shot fired by Faulkner. Why Chobert changed his story did not become clear until 13 years later when, at a court hearing in 1995, he admitted that at the time of the shooting he had been driving his taxicab without a license while still on probation for felony arson--throwing a Molotov cocktail at a grammar school. The jury which presumably found Chobert truthful never heard these facts. Furthermore Chobert revealed in 1995 that he had asked Jamal's prosecutor to help get his driver's license back. Years later he was still driving, unhindered by the police, without a license. Abu-Jamal's lawyers say other witnesses that did not testify also reported seeing a heavyset man shoot Faulkner and flee.

In an unrelated proceeding, six former Philadelphia District Attorneys swore under oath that no accused could receive a fair trial in Sabo's court.

* A medical examiner's report states that Faulkner's wounds were made by a .44-cal gun, but Mumia had a .38. This key evidence was withheld from Mumia and his defense in his 1982 trial. Moreover, a weapons expert found it incredible that the police at the scene of the shooting failed to test Jamal's gun to see if it had been recently fired or to testhis hands to see if he had fired a weapon.

* Gary Wakshul, a police officer who accompanied Abu-Jamal from the crime scene, was allowed to go on vacation during the original trial. Wakshul filed a report saying, "The Negro male made no statements." That contradicted testimony from Faulkner's partner and a hospital security guard who said that, shortly after the shooting, Abu-Jamal made a confession. From the 1995 testimony of Officer Wakshul we now know that after Jamal filed police brutality charges, Assistant District Attorney Joseph McGill convened a meeting of police officers involved in the case. At this meeting McGill raised the question of whether Jamal might have made a confession (hint, hint!). He then asked any officers who might have heard a confession to raise their hands. (This meeting had never before been disclosed to the defense.) Thus we are asked to believe that an experienced trial reporter like Jamal (who certain knew his Miranda rights) foolishly made a public confession, then none of the many police officers present (including Faulkner's partner) thought it significant enough to mention until two months later when prodded by the D.A., and we are to ignore the fact that the attending physician has also stated that Jamal made no statements.

Other flaws in Mumia's trial:

- In an unrelated proceeding, six former Philadelphia District Attorneys swore under oath that no accused could receive a fair trial in Sabo's court.

- Mumia's jury was made up of 10 whites and 2 blacks... hardly representative of the Philadelphia population (40% black). Eleven qualified African Americans were rejected by the prosecution, a standard practice as was recently revealed in the exposure of a "training tape" for excluding blacks from juries prepared by the Philadelphia District Attorney's office in the mid-1980s.

- Philadelphia reigns as the "capital of capital punishment." A 1998 study by the Death Penalty Information Center, titled "The Death Penalty in Black and White," notes that blacks make up 84 percent of those on death row from Philadelphia and that black men from that city are almost four times more likely to receive a death sentence than other defendants.

- Abu-Jamal was alotted just $800 for investigators and expert witnesses. Says Mumia's attorney, Weinglass, "You cannot put on a death case for $800." •

15 innocent former death row inmates issue appeal in support of Mumia

Chicago: *Fifteen former death row inmates released from the Row after their wrongful convictions were overturned have signed an appeal calling on the State of Pennsylvania to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. The letter was circulated during the the National Conference on Wrongful Convictions & the Death Penalty in Chicago during the weekend of Nov. 13.*

Each of the signers was convicted and sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit, and subsequently released from death row after being deemed factually innocent by a court official or after charges were dropped due to overwhelming evidence of innocence.

Efforts are under way to circulate the former death row inmates' appeal to members of the European Parliament.

The initiative to draft and circulate the appeal to inmates was undertaken by organizations which belong to Chicago's ad hoc committee in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Participating organizations and individuals included Neighbors Against Police Brutality, the Aaron Patterson Defense Committee, the October 22nd Coalition/ Chicago, the Prison Action Committee, and former Illinois death row inmate Darby Tillis.

Illinois was in the house for the Mumia during the Wrongful Convictions Conference. Seven out of the nine death row inmates who've been released from Illinois prisons after their wrongful convictions were overturned signed the appeal in support of Abu-Jamal.

A message from innocent people who have been freed from Death Row:

There are innocent men and women on death row in this country. We know, for we were numbered among them. Many of us endured for years in the narrow and isolated confines of a barren cell designed to murder our spirits, as the State struggled to win final legal sanction to steal our lives.

Such is the case with Mumia Abu-Jamal, an award-winning journalist, an outspoken opponent of racism and police brutality, a militant champion of justice for Black people, a man who for decades has been the voice of the dispossessed and the disenfranchised and an innocent man on death row in Pennsylvania.

We know Mumia's struggle, because no-one knows better than we of the lengths to which the criminal "justice" system will go in its relentless quest to take a life. Many of us are intimately familiar with the daily degradation of Mumia's seventeen years on death row: locked in his cell for 23 hours each day, forbidden to embrace or even see his family members, prohibited from being filmed or audio taped by reporters, slapped into punitive detention for writing and publishing his views, refused the right to confidentially communicate with his attorneys. We were sustained in our struggle for justice, as Mumia is, by the tireless support of our families, friends, and people of principle who organized to liberate us from the machine that tried to slay us. And above all else we were sustained, as Mumia is, by the only real certainty we were allowed on death row the knowledge that we were innocent.

The State sought to poison us, electrocute us or hang us with the machine-like indifference it reserves for people it has determined to be worthless and therefore disposable in this country, overwhelmingly poor people and people of color. If our murders could be used to enhance a political career or a partisan policy debate, then so much the better. But the State seeks to murder Mumia with a ruthless and relentless fervor that has publicly defied any pretext of fairness or decency. Let us be clear: the State's campaign to murder Mumia is designed above all else to silence a Black man who dares to speak truth to power. As Mumia himself has said, the State does not seek just his death, it seeks his silence.

It is for these reasons that we call on all people of conscience to speak out, to organize against this travesty of justice, and to demand Mumia's freedom. To allow Pennsylvania to murder Mumia is to allow the State to succeed in slaughtering another innocent and in silencing a voice for the voiceless. We know that the State will not concede its wrongdoing without a struggle. We know that the authorities who have sought to murder this man will not submit to justice unless we, the people, organize to fight the State's abuse of power. Join us. Stand with Mumia Abu-Jamal, our brother and our friend, and demand that the State of Pennsylvania set him free.

List Of Signatories:

Kirk Bloodsworth: Maryland, Convicted 1984, Released 1993
Joseph Burrows: Illinois, Convicted 1989, Released 1994
Perry Cobb: Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1987
Muneer Deeb: Texas, Convicted 1985, Released 1993
Gary Gauger: Illinois, Convicted 1993, Released 1996
Verneal Jimerson: Illinois, Convicted 1985, Released 1996
Troy Lee Jones: California, Convicted 1982, Released 1996
David Keaton: Florida, Convicted 1971, Released 1973
Ronald Keine: New Mexico, Convicted 1974, Released 1976
Carl Lawson: Illinois, Convicted 1990, Released 1996
Wilbert Lee: Florida, Convicted 1963, Released 1975
Bradley P. Scott: Florida, Convicted 1988, Released 1991
Delbert Tibbs: Florida, Convicted 1974, Released 1977
Darby (Williams) Tillis: Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1987
Dennis Williams: Illinois, Convicted 1979, Released 1996

Olympia's *Free Mumia Coalition*

***Advertising** - The Olympia community-based Mumia solidarity group is working toward purchasing an ad in a Pennsylvania newspaper to show that the world is watching. They estimate this will cost $800. We need help raising money and for just $5. your name can be listed.

***Call National Public Radio** - Encourage NPR to air the reports that Mumia did for them from inside prison. Because of police pressure, they were never played. Now is our chance to try again. Call National Public Radio at 1-800-235-1212.

***If Mumia's Death Warrant is signed**, this is the plan of action decided on by both community and student groups.

1. The day the warrant is signed, call everyone you know and have them meet at Percival Landing at 5pm for a candle-light vigil/protest on both sides of the 4th Ave. bridge.

2. The day after the warrant is signed, there will be a protest/march starting at Seattle Central Community College at 5pm.

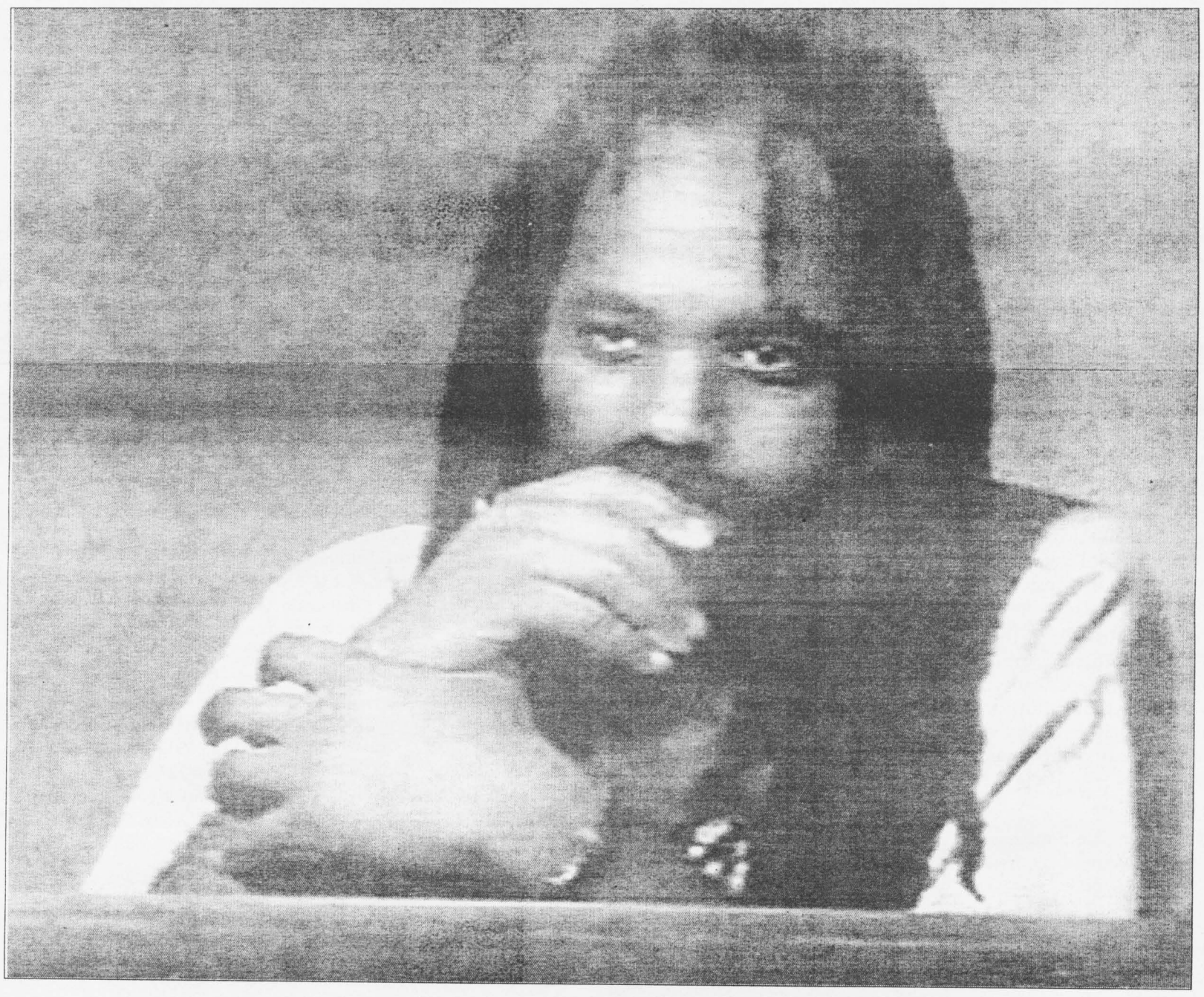
3. The Saturday after the warrant is signed, there will be a protest/march starting at Seattle Central Community College at noon.

4. As soon as the death warrant is signed, various folks in Olympia will begin a hunger strike, camping out in Sylvester Park or on the Capitol Campus.

5. There is talk that high school students will have an organized walk-out if the death warrant is signed. Evergreen students will try to do the same.

If you want to help with anything (letter writing, official's addresses, speaker's bureau, etc.) or have any questions, please call EPIC at 866-6000 x6144 or 352-7336 or epic@elwha.evergreen.edu

Everyone Deserves a Fair Trial



Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Poster for your use to hang in your window courtesy of *Works In Progress*, December 1998

Women in Prison
If We Don't Tell Them, They Won't Know

Laura Whitehorn

Editorial note: *Laura Whitehorn is a columnist for* Prison Legal News (PLN), *a nationally recognized, prisoner publication based in Monroe, Washington. This article is reprinted from the November issue.*

A recent issue of *PLN* called for articles and information from women prisoners. I hope women throughout the state and federal prison systems will respond to this request. If we are ever to change the hideous situations we face at the hands of the prosecutors, judges, and prisoncrats, we must speak up and we must speak for ourselves.

Who can understand and describe, as we can, the abusive ways we are kept in line? The issue of sexual abuse and harassment comes to light only when an incident occurs that is so outrageous that even the system can't get away with ignoring it. And that is rare.

But women prisoners know that the foundation for that abuse is laid everyday: when male guards patrol our housing units, where we have no privacy to change clothes, bathe, or use the bathroom. When male guards joke about doing strip searches in place of the women guards or when they pat search us daily. When male guards yell at women prisoners (as they do all the time), raising the unspoken threat of violence, and often triggering memories of how a young girl was frightened and overpowered by an adult male who misused his authority to misuse her body. This is the daily reality of women in prison but no one will know if we don't tell them. If we don't tell it, no one will understand that sexual harassment and abuse are not aberrations. They are integral to the methods by which we are controlled and repressed in the prison system.

Who can understand, as we do, how many women are serving ridiculously long sentences because they were in a relationship with a man (usually older, more experienced) who dealt drugs? We live in a community with young women whose lives have been torn apart because they did not turn in their boyfriend/husband/father of their children, because they can't prove that they weren't involved in the sale of drugs or, if they can prove it, they were still found guilty of "aiding and abetting" because they paid the rent and the phone bill. This is an important part of the mandatory minimum tragedy that we women know intimately. Who will tell our stories if we don't?

Who else can describe as we can the prospect of living for years in a cell built for one but now "home" to three with no desk, no shelves, no room to turn around? Men prisoners have filed suit, protested, and written about the indignity of double-celling. We women are packed in like sardines, defying the safety inspectors' mandates and we are the one who must make it known.

Who better than us can tell what it is to see a child growing up only in photos, to hear that small voice only on the phone (if we can afford the call), asking why we're gone so long? In the federal system, there are only three (soon to be four) prisons for women: Danbury, CT; Tallahassee, FL; Dublin, CA; and, soon, Carswell, TX. To be sent 3,000 miles from one's children is not at all unusual. For the growing number of women in the system from Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean the visiting room is a foreign country twice over. They never see it. If we don't publicize these cruelties, who will?

If we don't tell it, no one will understand that sexual harassment and abuse are not aberrations. They are integral to the methods by which we are controlled and repressed in the prison system.

Who besides us can tell the story of the waste that is federal time? Once a woman has her GED, there are precious few educational opportunities for her. We support and encourage one another, but obstacle after obstacle must be overcome in order to study and learn. We know what it's like to try to learn in our "library," stocked with encyclopedias printed before most of the women here were born. We know that community resources from the outside are not welcomed here, and that sympathetic people who try to come into the prison to speak, teach, share, learn have to possess mountains of will and determination (and patience!) to breach the wall. We must tell this tale, or it will remain untold.

We feel powerless. We are told every day that we are powerless. But that's a lie. As long as we have voices and one another, we hold our future in our control. We women prisoners have to speak, write, read, discuss and begin the process of change. *PLN* is a tool all prisoners need. It's the only place I know where reliable, current, useful information about all the laws affecting our lives as prisoners is available. Yet few women prisoners subscribe, and fewer still submit articles.

It's not a story on TV, a long-running soap opera. It's our story. Why are we waiting for someone else to write the script?

For subscriptions, Prison Legal News *can be contacted at* Prison Legal News, *2400 NW 80th Street #148, Seattle WA 98117. Article submissions may be made directly to the editors: Paul Wright #930783, PO Box 777, Monroe WA 98272; or Dan Pens #279308, PO Box 888, Monroe WA 98272.*

PLN is online with a newly designed Website: www.prisonlegalnews.org. It will soon be an exhaustive research site for prison litigation and provide fully references back issues of PLN. •

Attention Prisoners

W.I.P. seeks articles, artwork (black and white is best) from those in prison. Please send submissions to:

Works In Progress,
PO Box 295,
Olympia WA 98507-0295

Books To Prisoners
December Events

- **Books to Prisoners has moved to the downstairs back room at BullDog News.**
- **Open drop in work/training sessions every Thurs. 3-9 pm in the back of Bulldog News, 116 E. 4th, Olympia. *Training takes about 1 hour. Once you are trained you can work anytime Bulldog is open.***
- **BTP Volunteer Potluck - 3rd Sun. of the month (Dec 20th), 3 pm at Liberation Cafe 116 E. 4th Ave, Olympia**
- **Turn in Bayview and Ralph's receipts. Please bring in or mail all the receipts you can. B to P receives 1%. Please send to the address below.**
- **Save the UPC code from Western Family Products and send to B to P, 116 E 4th Ave, Olympia, WA 98501**

Your Help Is Needed

Because of the huge number of letters Books for Prisoners-Olympia Support Group receives each month and its limited resources, requests often wait many months to be filled. Thousands of letters still remain in boxes. Your help and generousity are urgently needed.

If we desire individuals in this country's prisons to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic, then we too need to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic. We need to "walk the talk." Please donate your time, money or books.

In greatest demand are:

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Frequently requested are:

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Please donate:

- Any other good books
- Stamps and stamp money
- Money for tape, wrapping paper, copying

Please bring donations of books to the Books to Prisoner-Olympia office at the Liberation Cafe above Bulldog News.

Please make checks payable to Books to Prisoners.

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Telephone: (360) 352-7336

Inmates — All correspondence to Books to Prisoners *must* go through the main branch:
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To receive a program or get more information about shows, show times, locations, and prices call 754-6670.

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:

Friday, Dec. 18th

6pm at Liberation Cafe

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Radical Women Condemns Murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian—Calls for Armed Self-Defense of Doctors and Clinics

Nancy Reiko Kato

Radical Women condemns the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian by anti-abortion terrorists on October 23 in Buffalo, New York. The assassination of Dr. Slepian escalates the battle over a woman's right to choose what to do with her body.

This latest horror is part of an international rightwing campaign aimed at forcing women back into the home—if not legally through the courts, then illegally through blockades, bombings, arsons, harassment of clinic physicians, staff and clients, shootings and murder. Dr. Slepian is the seventh person to be murdered by anti-abortionists. The increase in violence against women has led to an increase in violence against people of color and gays—witness the brutal and hateful murders of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming and James Byrd in Texas.

Radical Women holds the rightwing anti-abortion movement directly responsible for Dr. Slepian's murder. Some "pro-lifers" say they abhor the violence their more extreme members engage in, but if they are sincere, it is time for them to prove it by finding a new cause, such as helping to feed the thousands of hungry and homeless children. The anti-abortion movement is hopelessly infested with Klan types, racists, and Nazi skinheads. Their stated goal—to deny women the right to reproductive freedom—is fascist.

We also hold the Democrats and Republicans accountable for the brutal slaying of Dr. Slepian. Even before the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal, the U.S. government has been ineffective in stopping the escalation of violence against clinic staff or women. Both parties encourage hatred against women, especially poor and immigrant women, with their welfare cuts. With no abortion providers in 84% of the nation's counties, federal legislation threatens to prosecute anyone who assists young women across state lines to obtain an abortion. The bombing suspect in the Atlanta Northside Family Planning Services and the lesbian bar is still at large.

As the government drags its heels on prosecuting the anti-abortionists who participate in clinic violence, women refuse to be forced back into the home and motherhood on demand. Women will not return to the days of back-alley butchers, coat-hangers or knitting needles. Women and men refuse to be intimidated by this latest outrage.

Women will not return to the days of back-alley butchers, coat-hangers or knitting needles. Women and men refuse to be intimidated by this latest outrage.

Radical Women calls for feminists to:

1. Organize armed self-defense of abortion clinics and physicians who perform abortions to counter the tide of anti-abortion violence and to safeguard women's right to reproductive freedom. Demand federal money so that clinic defenders can hire, train, and arm civilian guards and so that clinics can install metal detectors and post guards at their entrances and protect doctors.

2. A quick and thorough investigation and prosecution of those responsible for Dr. Slepian's murder.

3. Free and safe abortion on demand to any woman, including those under the age of 18. Congress and the courts must eradicate the state-imposed waiting periods or spousal/parental permission.

4. Convene a community-controlled commission to investigate the connections between the anti-abortion movement and the ultraright.

Radical Women was founded in 1967, making it one of the oldest national socialist feminist organizations in the U.S. Radical Women has been in the forefront of the fight for abortion and was instrumental in getting abortion legalized in Washington State through a 1970 voter referendum. Radical Women is a leader in clinic defense having initiated coalitions in California, New York, Washington and Oregon to fight Operation Rescue, Advocates for Life and other anti-abortion groups. The Radical Women National Office is located at 1908 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 864-1278 or (415) 864-0778 (fax), email: nrkato@rocketmail.com.

This map shows officially confirmed incidents of extreme violence from 1993-when the first doctor was killed-to the present, as reported to the National Abortion Federation. It includes arsons, bombings, and butyric acid attacks, as well as shootings and a stabbing.

This map does not include attempted bombings and arsons, nor the shootings of abortion doctors that police may have wrongly classified as robberies. Nor does this map include incidents of low-level violence-like stalking, picketing, and death threats-that have been an endless source of trauma for people on the front lines.

Village Voice = November 3 - 9, 1998

Single-Payer Health Care Protects Standard of Living

Lach Franquemont

In the Declaration of Independence, our founding fathers set down several basic human rights, those being life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Later, they adopted the Bill of Rights, which further outlined what rights we can expect in this country.

Absent from those rights, however, was the right for health care. To provide many of the others, though, it too must be included.

How can a person have life without treatment for a disease that is killing them? How can they have liberty or pursue happiness if they are crippled or brain damaged by the lack of preventive medicine?

This country does not ensure these needs will be met. Therefore, as Joycelyn Elders said in her speech at K-State, "We don't have a health care system. What we have is a very expensive sick care system."

There are many reasons why it is so expensive. A large share of the problem, however, can be laid at the feet of the insurance industry.

Insurance companies refuse to cover high-risk people and are also too expensive for many people to afford. According to the Missouri Coalition for Single Payer Health Care (MOSP), almost 40 million people in the United States have no health insurance.

Because of this, many emergency procedures have to be performed by hospitals when they have little hope of being paid fully. This increases the price that hospitals charge to people able to pay. This in turn drives up insurance prices.

Insurance companies do little to encourage preventive health care. Because of this, problems that could have been treated easily and cheaply at early stages become expensive, painful ordeals.

Many insurance companies own hospitals and pharmaceutical companies. They steer their customers to these hospitals, causing competing hospitals to have to double up on expensive technology. Then the insurance companies require drugs that their pharmaceutical companies produce to be prescribed.

This system leads to lots of waste, and therefore, higher premiums.

The solution to this problem is a single-payer health care system, with universal coverage and an emphasis on preventive medicine. Under a single-payer health care plan, the government would guarantee health care for all citizens by becoming the sole source of insurance.

Single-payer health care would provide universal coverage with everyone eligible for benefits no matter what their employment, age or health status.

It would provide comprehensive benefits and high-quality health care for everyone. It gives the patient the right to choose their own providers, and it gives providers the right to base medical decisions on health criteria alone.

Back during the health care debates two years ago, quite a bit of propaganda was released by insurance companies regarding single-payer health care. This primarily took the form of comparisons between our own system and the Canadian single-payer method.

The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not provide health care to all of its citizens. It is high time that we caught up.

Many of these comparisons were distortions or outright lies.

Canadians only have to wait longer for elective surgery. This is surgery that may not be necessary. In general, Canadians get care at the same, and in many cases faster rates, than people who live in the United States.

It is untrue that Canadians are flocking across the border in order to get health care in the United States. In fact, according to MOSP, in 1994 almost twice as many Americans went to Canada for health care as Canadians who came to the United States to be treated.

Single-payer is not socialized medicine. The government would not own the hospitals or the pharmaceutical companies. People would actually have more choice in which provider they wished to use.

According to the General Accounting Office, the adoption of a single-payer system would save 10 percent of the national health care budget. One trillion dollars is spent annually on health, meaning that this would be a savings of 100 billion dollars. Most of these savings would come from the elimination of wasteful bureaucracy and unnecessary profits.

According to MOSP, the United States is the only industrialized nation that does not provide health care to all of its citizens. It is high time that we caught up.

As a nation, we must get away from profit driven criteria in our decision making. Our standard of living has been decreasing yearly as we allow the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer.

Let's not let the insurance companies hold us back from improving life in this country. Don't sacrifice your liberty to their inequitable system, or the pursuit of happiness will end abruptly for far too many of us.

Anyone who wishes to discuss the subject matter of this column please e-mail Lach Franquemont at (lach@ksu.ksu.edu).

Lach Franquemont is a sophomore in physics and philosophy at Kansas State University. •

Some Basic Things Men Can Do and Be to Help Prevent Eating Disorders

Michael Levine, Ph.D.

1. Reject completely the notion that "eating disorders are a 'women's issue'". In the 1890's, 1920's and 1980's, eating disorders have flourished within an atmostphere of anxiety and anger about women's rights and opportunities. Thus, eating disorders are, in a very important sense, sociopolitical issues with a clear connection to men and power.

2. Low self-esteem, helplessness, anger, shame, and rage reside at the core of every eating disorder. Consequently, men can contribute to the prevention of eating disorders by taking personal *and* political action that:

(a) reverses discrimination against women in the workplace, on the streets and at home; (b) ensures that women are free from harassment, assault and other forms of violence to their bodies and souls; (c) encourages women (and men) to accept and develop themselves as people, not as attractive packages based on restrictive ideals; (d) develops relationships between (and images of) men and women that are based on respect, not exploitation.

3. Accept responsibility for learning about sexism within our patriarchal and capitalist society. Feminists are tired and justifiably so, of repeatedly explaining to well-meaning but ultimately condescending males what feminism is all about.

4. Abandon sexism because it offers to men the promise of privilege, influence, and control, all at the expense of both our relationships with others and our self-development through caring, feeling, sensitivity, and equality.

5. Accept the notion that men must change themselves and other men (including sons) in order to help prevent eating disorders, and that such change, while initially difficult, will ultimately benefit both sexes.

6. Begin to think seriously and constantly about yourself as a "gendered" being. Consider, for example, how "free" and "independent" you really are when you (a) hesitate before putting on an apron, or (b) reflexively consider shooting baskets and talking, as opposed to playing one-on-one, to be a "waste of time."

7. Take your role as a father, brother, uncle seriously. Men play a very significant role in the emotional and psychosocial development of girls and boys. Abnegation of the role of the father, in particular in the name of "work" or other "success" or "lack of time" is a contribution to (a) the emotional distress ("hunger") underlying eating disorders in females; and (b) the feelings of powerlessness, insecurity and rage in males that fuel the oppression of women through objectification, pornography, and other forms of violence.

8. Learn more about, and develop a principled tolerance for diversity. One aspect of sexism is "weightism," and the powerful forces seen in both are also at work in many other "-ismatic" forms of prejudice.

9. Don't just acknowledge conflict for women in changing gender roles; experience it for yourself. Start by endeavoring to be a person instead of a "success object."

10. Take an inventory of any messages about the glorification of slenderness and the vilification of body fat which you may be intentionally or inadvertently communicating to the men/boys and women/girls in your life.

11. As you speak up and out for women and their rights, and as you relate to a spouse, a daughter, a sister, spend lots of time being silent and listening (really listening) to what women have to say. As immortalized in the work of Carl Rogers, authentic respect in the form of nonjudgmental listening can be truly empowering (whereas a successful diet cannot...).

Note: If you have comments, criticisms, or other thoughts on these principles to which you think I need to listen carefully, please do not hesitate to contact me: Michael Levine, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022-9623. (614) 427-5370; E-mail: LEVINE@KENYON.EDU

Reprinted from Eating Disorders Awareness & Prevention

Pinochet and the British Courts:

The Masters Make the Rules

Ron Jacobs

October 29, 1998

One law for the rulers and another for the ruled. So decided English Chief Justice Bingham in his ruling granting the mass murderer (and former dictator of Chile) Augusto Pinochet immunity. His exact words were: "The applicant is entitled as a former head of state to immunity from civil and criminal proceedings of the English courts." I don't know about you, but my reading of this decision is that Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, and a few other murderous former heads of state would walk out of this man's court room, as well. Once again, the law written by the rich and powerful for those of us not so favored has protected its own.

Let's get it straight. Augusto Pinochet ordered the deaths of perhaps 4000 people, if not more. He did this after violently overthrowing a legally elected government in the sovereign nation of Chile. Of course, he had a little help in this endeavor from Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Ananconda Copper, ITT, and that always friendly-to-dictators bureaucracy—the Central Intelligence Agency. That's another story, however, and one that would also be dealt with if there were true justice on this planet. But, if Pinochet can get out of his murder charges, believe me, so will the CIA and Henry Kissinger.

One of the most moving times I ever heard Joan Baez sing was in Washington, D.C. at a funeral procession for Orlando Letelier and Ronnie Moffitt. These two individuals were killed by Pinochet's secret police—the DINA—by a car bomb in the middle of the U.S. capital city. As Joan sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", fascist demonstrators threw dirt and insults at those of us who had gathered to commemorate these two individuals and condemn the governments responsible for the murder. Business as usual. The men directly responsible for the car bomb were eventually arrested, tried and jailed, (after years of intense pressure from several governments and individuals) but their leaders weren't. Leaders who, like Major Medina, General Westmoreland and President Johnson in the My Lai Massacre case, got off scot free.

It's called plausible deniability in the cases of My Lai and Iran-Contra. In Pinochet's case, it's just the old story of the powerful protecting the powerful. After all, thinks the British judge (or the president or the prime ministerà) that could be me. Pinochet was not an aberration in the way he ruled, just excessive. Indeed, as I write, the U.S. security establishment is considering removing the "ban" on assassinations so that it can kill its current terrorist menace—Osama bin Laden—and whomever they decide is the next one. As for that court in England—how long have they been imprisoning IRA members without trial or charges? If one is surprised that Pinochet may get off, then they have been fooling themselves about the nature of justice in the courts of the powerful. One should be more surprised if he is tried and found guilty. •

Let's get it straight. Augusto Pinochet ordered the deaths of perhaps 4000 people, if not more. He did this after violently overthrowing a legally elected government in the sovereign nation of Chile.

Empty Threats from Ballistic Missiles

William D. Hartung and Gary Ferdman

In a controversial new report, a panel chaired by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld suggests that states like Iran, Iraq and North Korea could acquire ballistic missiles that can reach U.S. soil in five years or less, not the dozen years or more estimated by U.S. intelligence agencies. House Speaker Newt Gingrich has called the report the "greatest alarm bell for American security since the end of the Cold War."

But the only people who need to be alarmed about the Rumsfeld report are U.S. taxpayers. It is the latest attempt by the Star Wars lobby to scare us to death over a threat that doesn't exist.

Iraq is under U.N. sanctions and has no prospect of starting a major long-range missile program.

North Korea hasn't tested a missile since 1993, and recently hinted that it might be willing to get rid of its existing missiles as part of a comprehensive security bargain on the Korean peninsula.

Iran has just tested a medium-range missile that might reach as far as Israel, but as Tim Weiner of the New York Times notes, Iran is still "years away" from building a nuclear bomb that can be loaded onto its missiles.

Last, but not least, a leader of any of these alleged rogue states would have to be suicidal to launch a handful of ballistic missiles at the United States when the inevitable response would be an overwhelming counterattack that would destroy their societies as functioning entities.

In short, there is no credible Third World ballistic missile threat to the United States. And contrary to the Rumsfeld panel's assumption that a nation that had tested one long-range missile could quickly mount a "sneak attack," there would be plenty of warning time -- the visibility of the tests and the size of the facilities that would be needed to build an intercontinental ballistic missile would be enough to tip off even our admittedly bumbling intelligence community.

So why is the Rumsfeld panel so intent on hyping the threat of Third World missiles? The short answer is pork-barrel politics. Rumsfeld serves on the boards of several major defense contractors. The main beneficiaries of the Star Wars boondoggle are major military contractors like Boeing and Lockheed Martin, who have poured millions into the political campaigns of Newt Gingrich, Trent Lott, Bill Clinton and the coffers of both major parties in their drive to keep this gravy train up and running.

Not that we haven't wasted billions on Star Wars already. The Brookings Institution has documented more than $55 billion in government spending on missile defenses in the past 15 years, with precious little to show for it. The hit-to-kill vehicle that has been the centerpiece of the ballistic missile defense plan has failed in seven of nine tests this decade, and Lockheed Martin's Theater High Altitude Area Defense system is zero for five.

While these tests are not likely to result in a credible defense against missiles, they have a much higher probability of antagonizing Russia and China and undermining the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, one of the few restraints still standing in the way of a full-scale renewal of the nuclear-arms race.

As Albert Einstein pointed out at the beginning of the nuclear age, there is no defense against nuclear weapons. It's time to abandon the fruitless search for a technical fix for the nuclear peril and get on with the serious business of disarmament. Not only will our children be safer, but we will free up tens of billions of dollars to invest in education, health care, and clean air and water -- investments that will make their lives more secure and prosperous.

In short, there is no credible Third World ballistic missile threat to the United States... the visibility of the tests and the size of the facilities that would be needed to build an intercontinental ballistic missile would be enough to tip off even our admittedly bumbling intelligence community.

William D. Hartung is a senior research fellow at the World Policy Institute at the New School for Social Research in New York. Gary Ferdman is the executive director of the New York-based Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities, a nationwide group of business executives working to reduce the military budget and invest the proceeds in domestic needs.

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(Events, continued)

this important issue and the National Labor Committee's 1998 Holiday Season of Conscience. Call Jeff at 534-9369 for more info. **Traditions Fair Trade Café, 300 5th Av. SW, 7-9pm, December 9.**

Human Dignity Vigil to Oppose Sweatshops and Child Labor. In Honor of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Next to Chehalis, Wal-Mart, **10am-Noon, Saturday, December 12**. Call Jeff at 534-9369 for more info.

Sustainable Community Roundtable needs volunteers! The Roundtable offers the following jobs: council members, mailing parties, office assistant and distribution. Contact the Roundtable at 754-7842 or roundtable@olywa.net. Upcoming events: **Sound Exchange Winter Community Bazaar, Sat. Dec. 12, 11am-6pm at Eagle's Hall in Olympia**. Call 709-0704 for more information; Tues. Dec. 22, Nights of the Roundtable: Winter Solstice, Unitarian Church, Olympia.

Benefit Show for the Rainforests down the coast AK-CA. Eyak Preservation Fund and Dune Lankard preserving the Copper River Delta, AK book signing from Dr. Rike Ott. Music from Joanne Rand and Alice Di Mecele. **7pm, Saturday, December 12 at Capitol Theater for $7-10**. Call 867-1223 for more info.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays presents Marc Adams, author of "The Preacher's Son" - his story of being raised as the son of a fundamentalist Baptist minister. The book chronicles his attendance at and employment by Jerry Falwell's university and his coming out of fundamentalism and comint out to his family. **Sun. Dec. 13, 2pm at First United Methodist Church in Olympia**. Call 866-0511 for more information.

Radical New Year. Join Northwest rabble-rousers for Radical Women's annual New Year's celebration, the red hot spot for rebel movers and shakers. Festivities include salsa dancing, comedy spoofs, "Nothing's-Too-Good-For-the-Workingclass" buffet, and a no-host bar. **Thurs. Dec. 31, 8:30pm**. New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S. Door donation $5.00, buffet donations $14.95. Sliding scale and work exchanges available for low income. For tickets, rides or childcare, please call in advance 206/722-6057 or 722/2453. Wheelchair accessible.

David Korten, author of "**When Corporations Rule the World**" will be speaking at the Ecology auditorium at noon on **Monday, Jan. 11th**.

The National Week of Action Against Immigration Raids (Oct. 11-18) has come and gone, but there is still work to do. Call 1-888-515-8535 to report raids and INS abuses. E-mail hollis.pfitsch@wairj.org to put your name, fax or e-mail address on an urgent action response list. Whenever there is a raid, the **Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice** (WAIRJ) will send out information asking you to call your congressional reps to protest. To order WAIRJ's report about how raids have affected communities over the past year, call 206/340-9187. Civil Rights Under Siege: The Impact of Immigration Raids on WA State is available for a $10 donation.

Examining The Soviet System

Dave Zink

***Blackshirts and Reds: Rational Fascism and the Overthrow of Communism* by Michael Parenti 160 pages, 1997, City Lights Books, San Francisco**

In *Blackshirts and Reds*, Michael Parenti takes a look at the Soviet experiment in building a post-capitalist society, and at Fascism as a reaction to it. The result is a bold and entertaining exploration.

Parenti begins with some observations on the current growing popularity of fascist T-shirts, paraphernalia, and books that "explain" Hitler, sanitize the holocaust, "reevaluate" Mussolini and Franco, and put a positive spin on fascist history. Among other things, this is fostering an increase in hate crimes.

Why study fascism? After all, according to popular opinion, formed for the most part in the schools (using textbooks that mainly reflect a corporate viewpoint), mass media and the entertainment industry (mostly corporate owned), fascism was an unexplainable descent into madness and barbarism. If fascism was indeed an unaccountable loss of reason and sanity, then there can be no defense, and there is nothing we can do to prevent a return of fascism.

But irrational violence has no particular target. It indiscriminately lashes out at whatever is convenient. This was not - and is not - the case when fascism takes power. Fascist violence is not blind. There are definite, planned, and selected targets. Fascism is not a departure into insanity. There were - and are - definite, rational reasons why this social phenomenon occurs. Thus there are things we can do to stop it.

But fascism is dead - a monstrosity that was killed in World War II, right? That would be great, if only it was true. An honest look at reality, however, leads one to another conclusion: that as long as capitalism exists, the fascist monster is waiting in the wings - a very real threat we need to be aware of. Parenti looks into how and why Fascism rose to power in Italy, Spain, and Germany. There were common patterns. In the years following World War I, Europe found itself mired in an inflationary recession. Return on capital investment was stagnating. To increase profit levels, corporations had to cut labor costs and raise prices, and they demanded massive subsidies and tax exemptions. How was a government to finance this corporate welfarism? In Italy, the wealthy pressured their government to tax the general population more heavily, reduce social services, and cut welfare to the poor.

But there was an obstacle. Already by 1921, many Italian workers and peasants were unionized and had their own political organizations. Through years of struggle, working people had won some concessions in wages and working conditions. Many saw Soviet Russia as an attractive example of how to build a better society. To impose austerity measures upon the general population, the means by which workers defended their modest living standards had to be destroyed. For this task, the privileged class recruited Benito Mussolini, armed with his gangs of Blackshirts. A coordinated, well-funded campaign of terror and propaganda was unleashed.

The fascists declared that their goal - and the goal of all patriots - was to strengthen the corporate state, in which all members of society would work together for the betterment of all in the fatherland. Unions, according to the fascists, were irrelevant troublemakers which workers no longer needed. Fascism would restore the glories of the golden past: Imperial Rome in the case of Italy, and the joyous, well-ordered Reich in Germany. The good old days would return. The fascists deceived a lot of people. In the two-year period leading up to Mussolini's seizure of power,

"The fascists... attacked 243 socialist centers and other buildings, killed 202 workers (in addition to 44 killed by the police), and wounded 1,144. During this period, 2,240 workers were arrested and only 162 fascists, and 500 labor halls and cooperative stores were burned." (From Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, quoted in *Blackshirts and Reds*.)

In Germany, the process was repeated with slight variations. Corporations supplied the Nazi party with generous funds for political campaigning and financing youth and paramilitary groups. In 1932, Hitler and the Nazis received 37.3% of the vote - the highest they ever won in a democratic national election. To the extent that the Nazis had any reliable base, it was among the rich and the opportunistic middle class, who feared a Bolshevik-inspired working-class uprising. Strong-arm thugs, organized into the storm troopers, came mainly from the middle-class and the chronically unemployed.

Many Germans felt that a revolutionary change to socialism was a pretty good idea, but had a shallow understanding of what it was all about. The fascists took advantage of this. The very term "Nazi" is a contraction of "National Socialist", as opposed to international socialism, which fascist propaganda railed against as a "Jewish plot." The great majority of the working class supported either the Communists or Social Democrats to the very end. But, instead of working together against the Nazis, the two major working-class parties were stricken with sectarianism. Social Democrat officials actually used fascist thugs to attack left-wing demonstrators, imprison workers, and suppress Communist Party newspapers. (From Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle*.)

Once in power, who did the fascists support? In both Italy in the 20s and Germany in the 30s, old evils, thought to have passed into history, reappeared, as conditions of labor deteriorated. Union property and cooperatives were handed over to rich private owners. Safety regulations were abolished, work-hours were increased, wages were cut, and child labor was restored, as government "got off the back of industry." Taxes were increased for the general populace, but lowered or eliminated for the rich and corporations. While general poverty increased, corporate profits soared.

"If fascism means anything," says Parenti, "it means all-out government support for business and severe repression of pro-labor forces... A dictatorial force in the service of capitalism."

It is a generally-accepted truism in America that fascism and communism were twin totalitarian evils, one as bad as the other. But they received very different treatment. From the start, the communist movement was treated with hostility by U.S. policy makers, while U.S. corporations collaborated with the fascists. One example: factories in fascist countries, owned by Dupont, Ford, General Motors, and ITT, produced military hardware that wreaked havoc on Allied forces in the war.

The story continues. Behind the scenes, the alliance between corporate America and right-wing dictators around the world remains cozy. Millions of our tax dollars went to install and maintain butchers like General Pinochet and Suharto in power. The M16s and other military hardware used to overthrow the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile, suppress East Timor, and commit other atrocities, were made in the USA. Genocide, terrorism, and torture: our tax dollars at work!

It is imperative that we stop being fooled by the false choices they foist upon us, like "Marx vs. Jesus", "jobs vs. the environment", etc.

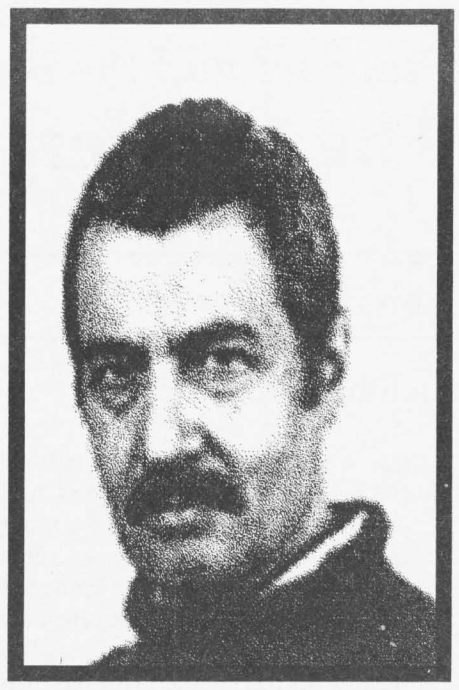
Parenti argues that these apparent examples of craziness are not irrational quirks of a basically rational system, but instead are predictable, rational results of the capitalist system. How accurate is the "evil empire" picture that we get of the USSR from the American school and media system? Parenti takes a penetrating look at the Soviet experience in the balance of history, and arrives at some interesting insights.

After the October Revolution, the young Soviet Union was floundering in a slough of problems inherited from the czarist past, including a low level of development. The counter-revolutionary Wars of Intervention, followed by unrelenting imperialist encirclement and harassment continually threatened to strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle. If Trotsky, Bukharin, or some other Soviet leader had succeeded Lenin, could they have done a better job? In a section on "Pure Socialism vs. Siege Socialism", Parenti dares to question some dearly-held orthodoxies.

In the chapter on "Stalin's Fingers", Parenti uses newly-published documentation to examine the record of the dictator. Stalin's misdeeds were exaggerated to boogey-man level in the corporate press in the McCarthy years. Stalin's crimes pale in comparison with those of his fascist contemporaries. Even with the tremendous problems they faced, the Soviets brought about dramatic improvements in the health and quality of living of the citizenry during their tenure. This was an example that the corporate powers could not tolerate, and spent billions of dollars to kill.

Today, Russia is undergoing forced capitalist "shock therapy", with rising racism and anti-semitism. In the two chapters on "The Free Market Goes East", Parenti describes how this translates into the everyday lives of workers and farmers in the former "communist" societies, and what they have to say about these changes.

In the last section of this book, Parenti discusses what he terms "ABC" ("Anything but Class") theory. He notes that activists today generally concentrate their attention on ethnic, gender, cultural, and life-style issues, thus contributing to the fractionalization and weakening of these movements. To be sure, there are very real issues, but Parenti suggests that it is a mistake to downplay our common interests and overlook the common enemy we face today.



The forces that propagate racism, sexism, militarism, homophobia, and ecological devastation in this country are the very same ones that impose class injustice and economic exploitation. People may not develop class-consciousness, but they are still impacted by the power, privilege, and handicaps related to the workings of capitalism. There are systemic causes for many of our problems. Awareness of class relations deepens and broadens understanding of culture, race, gender, the environment, and many other issues which affect us.

Anti-Marxists set up a caricature of Marxism, and then attack that caricature. Parenti defends Marxism as an attempt to comprehend society, with all its problems, in a holistic way. It isn't Holy Grail, but it is a useful tool in seeing connections and inter-relationships. It helps us to focus our limited energies and finances to effect positive change. The corporate rulers will continue in their "divide and rule" strategy - it has worked well for them so far. It is imperative that we stop being fooled by the false choices they foist upon us, like "Marx vs. Jesus", "jobs vs. the environment", etc.

We need to utilize the best of science and religion, seek common ground among all who care about where our country and world are headed, build linkages, and work together to build a better future for our children.

Michael Parenti's clear and compelling style invites us to make a break with dogmatic thought and ask why things are as they are. This is an enlightening book, well worth the price and your time.

The Books for Prisoners project and the Ecology Chapter of the Washington Public Employees Association are working to bring Michael Parenti to Olympia for two public appearances at the end of February, 1999. Stay tuned to *Works in Progress* for more information! •

TELL OUR ADVERTISERS THAT YOU SAW THEIR AD IN WIP!

(Kaiser Strike , cont.)

Alcoa and the other industry leaders, then why not pay their workers what is paid by the industry leaders. For instance, workers for one job category who make $14.65 an hour at Kaiser make $16.08 at Alcoa and Reynolds.

I can only conclude that the Kaiser stories and justifications of their contract proposals and punishing anti-strike practices are a smoke-screen for what is really an attempt to break the United Steelworkers of America Union. If it weren't, how would they have been able to hire replacement workers so quickly and with such accommodations. Clearly, a plan for holding out to break the union was the company's mindset going into negotiations. Moreover, again from their own press releases, we find them bragging, "The company also said it has a strong cash position as of September 30, 1998 to help it weather the possibility of a prolonged strike, with approximately $90 million of invested cash and approximately $268 million of availability under its credit agreement." (10/2/98) *If they are in such a strong cash position, why can't they just treat their workers fairly?* It is again clear to me, MAXXAM was lying in wait building reserves to crush the union.

What else do we know about the parent organization MAXXAM, Inc. and its subsidiary. Kaiser has plants, offices, and research and development facilities at 32 locations in 12 states in the U.S. and seven other countries. Altogether, it has about 9,600 employees, assets of about $3 billion and annual sales in excess of $2 billion. Kaiser Aluminum is a leading producer of alumina, primary aluminum, and fabricated aluminum products, and is a major supplier of alumina and primary aluminum in the domestic and international markets. MAXXAM, Inc. directly or indirectly holds approximately 63% of Kaiser.

MAXXAM Inc., is controlled by Charles Hurwitz, a Houston, Texas, industrialist who also owns a large tract of northern California redwood timber holdings. These holdings in northern California are the ones currently undergoing clearcutting. Mr. Hurwitz is after the fast buck and the quick dollar. His actions on more than one front indicate a lack of scruples.

The 320 unionized workers at the Tacoma plant have a long 50-year history of working through the difficulties and downturns in the economy. The workers there are the grandsons and granddaughters of the union members who fought hard to bring and maintain unionization at the Kaiser plant. In 1983, company officials came to the union and asked for a special deal. Kaiser Aluminum was in trouble-a crisis in the aluminum industry was eroding the company's profitability, and things were looking grim.

The union responded because in those days "loyalty at Kaiser was a two-way street." Kaiser Aluminum had stood by its workers and the union was prepared to stand by the company. The union released the company from its obligations under the USWA's coordinated agreements with the "Big 3" (Alcoa, Reynolds, and Kaiser). It was understood by everyone that when profits returned, union standards would be restored. Kaiser received wage and benefit concessions worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Long term, interest free loans were given to Kaiser as workers accepted preferred stock in replacement of a proportion of their wages.

Now, the company is in a better position than ever to keep its word-to pay union members back for their past sacrifices. Unfortunately, Kaiser is not the same company it was in 1983. It has forgotten about the principles of its founder-and about the promises it made fifteen years ago.

What can you do to stop Mr. Hurwitz, his corporation MAXXAM, and their subsidiary Kaiser from curtailing the buying power of Kaiser workers and their families living here in our community, stop them from relegating these workers to wages failing to keep up with inflation, thwarted bargaining tools, and reduced pensions and health benefits to Kaiser retirees?

* Post a support sign in your yard or in the window of your business or home.
* Write a letter to the editor expressing your views.
* Call in to radio talk shows to let listeners know how you feel.
* Write your elected officials and ask them to take a stand against Kaiser's union busting
* Call the Legislative hot line (1-800-562-6000) and request that unemployment be granted to Kaiser Steelworkers •

Why We Are On Strike at Kaiser

Dear Steelworker Member,

Last night, the five presidents of the Kaiser Master Agreement local unions voted unanimously to strike the company immediately. The presidents had previously received authorization to call the strike by votes of their 3000 local union members. There are many reasons which we would like to share with you.

1. Unfair Labor Practices by Kaiser. First and foremost, from the start of these negotiations, Kaiser committed unfair labor practices (violations of federal law) which made bargaining and reaching an agreement impossible. Among the ULPs were the following:

* Refusing to provide critical productivity information upon which the entire company approach to bargaining was based.
* Making a contract settlement offer contingent on not striking, in effect punishing union members for exercising their right to strike.
* Proposing to take pension service away from employees in retaliation for going on strike.
* Refusing to bargain over mandatory subjects of bargaining such as safety welding and return to work protocols.

2. At least 400 Jobs Eliminated. The company has now increased this to 600-900 jobs since this was written. From day one of the negotiations, Kaiser has insisted on permanently eliminating at least 400 of our 3000 jobs. The company proposals would require dozens of job combinations and job eliminations at each of the plants.

* Mead-131 Jobs Lost
* Trentwood-178 Jobs Lost
* Gramercy-57 Jobs Lost
* Tacoma-32 Jobs Lost
* Newark-20 Jobs Lost

3. Contracting Out. The company has alternatively demanded 1) gutting our contracting our protections so that the company would retain the right to give our jobs away any time it was "cost effective" and 2) specific agreements to contract our roughly 150 jobs-everything from janitors to painters to diesel mechanics to laborers.

4. Retiree Health Insurance Cap. The company proposal will cap the amount it pays for future retiree health insurance at the 1999 level. Starting in the year 2000, any increases above the cap will be paid by the pensioner, thus lowering your monthly pension. Instead of a pension increase, we will have a pension benefit decrease.

5. Inadequate Pension Increases. Kaiser has offered to increase our pension factors by only $5.00 per month over five years. Alcoa and Reynolds are already $6-$10 ahead of us and will negotiate a new contract almost 3 years before Kaiser's inadequate proposal comes up for renegotiation.

6. 5 Year Contract. Five years is just too long to trust Kaiser. We have had too many controversies and conflicts with the company on our existing contracts to go 5 years without being able to renegotiate.

7. Wages. We were promised in negotiations that "Kaiser will increase your standard of living". The reality is that Kaiser is only proposing to allow our standard of living to decline more slowly. Over five years, the new money proposed by the company only amounts to about 2.3% per year, less than the annual rate of inflation over the last decade (about 3%). At some locations the casing out of the Metal Price and Plant Specific Bonuses will actually result in a decrease.

8. Elimination of Supplemental and Local Agreements. At every plant the company has proposed a wholesale gutting of our seniority agreements and local understandings. Many of these have been proposed without explanation or justification and would, in the union's opinion, leave the plants in chaos. Among the most important of these agreements eliminated by Kaiser are:

* Seniority
* Overtime
* Overtime By-pass
* Shift Scheduling
* Vacation Scheduling
* Substitute Work

9. Imposition of Salaried Workforce. At Tacoma and Mead the company proposal would force the introduction of a "salaried" workforce in order to eliminate even more jobs. If the union refuses to go along with this scheme, Kaiser has threatened to punish the plants by refusing to invest in much-needed improvements. At Gramercy the company has threatened to withhold investment in the "double digest" system unless the union agrees to accept its ill-conceived and pathologically designed "skill-based" pay system. This system gives the company the right to periodically test employees' skills and fire those who fail. Layoffs would happen according to skill ratings and laid off employees would be "cashed out" with no hope of recall.

We are determined to roll back the company's unfair labor practices and to win a fair and equitable settlement from Kaiser that saves our jobs and strengthens our plants!

In Solidarity,
David Foster, Chairman
USWA/Kaiser Negotiating Committee

(Social Change, cont.)

into activities that help make WIP possible, as well as throwing some parties to let the community know we care and that this is a codependent relationship: you want real journalism, someone's gotta pay for it.

Myth: WIP is doing just fine financially; look, it can afford to come out every month for free!

Fact: WIP is free, but that does not mean that is published for free. The cost to print the newspaper runs on average at about $350-450 per month, depending on the size of the issue. The ad representatives, who operate on a commission-based wage, bring in about one-half of that amount, sometimes a bit more. Sometimes we are blessed with a donation from someone who lets us know she appreciates our work. Sometimes we are fortunate to receive a renewed subscription, or a new subscription. Sometimes businesses actually seek us out for ad space, due in part to the message we put out, and our audience. And sometimes we solicit funds, like with our rollerskating benefit that happens on December 3 at Skateland. Usually, though, we depend on our tiny nest egg to see us through, which never goes much beyond the cost of the next two issues.

Here's a challenge: if you read just one article you liked in the past year in these pages, send us a dollar. Have we got three hundred readers out there who liked just one article? If you all sent a dollar, that would almost pay for the next issue! Liked two articles, send us two bucks (hey, we've almost got the next two months paid for!). If you're feeling really generous, send yourself or someone you love a subscription, or walk the talk on prisoner's rights and subsidize a prisoner's subscription. Got a christmas bonus, gift from the 'rents, or found a wallet in the street? Become a patron or sustainer. Own a business? Get a free ad by becoming a patron business.

I could go on and on, but frankly, I know you are all aware of the many ways there are to donate. Has anyone tuned in to 89.3 FM, KAOS? If so, you are probably familiar with the yearly fund drive. It's an opportunity for the community to financially contribute to the "miracle" of free radio, no commercials. It is a miracle to many, because it takes exorbitant amounts of money (to you or I) to keep a radio station going. But if you love what they do, you show them by putting a check in the mail, which says that you support what they do and want them to keep doing it. ***WIP is a community institution as worthy as KAOS. Let's start treating it as such.*** And this is your yearly reminder to do just that: SUPPORT PROGRESSIVE LOCAL JOURNALISM AND DONATE TO WORKS IN PROGRESS. Community participation and sustainment in '99! •

BEFORE YOU FORGET, SUBSCRIBE!

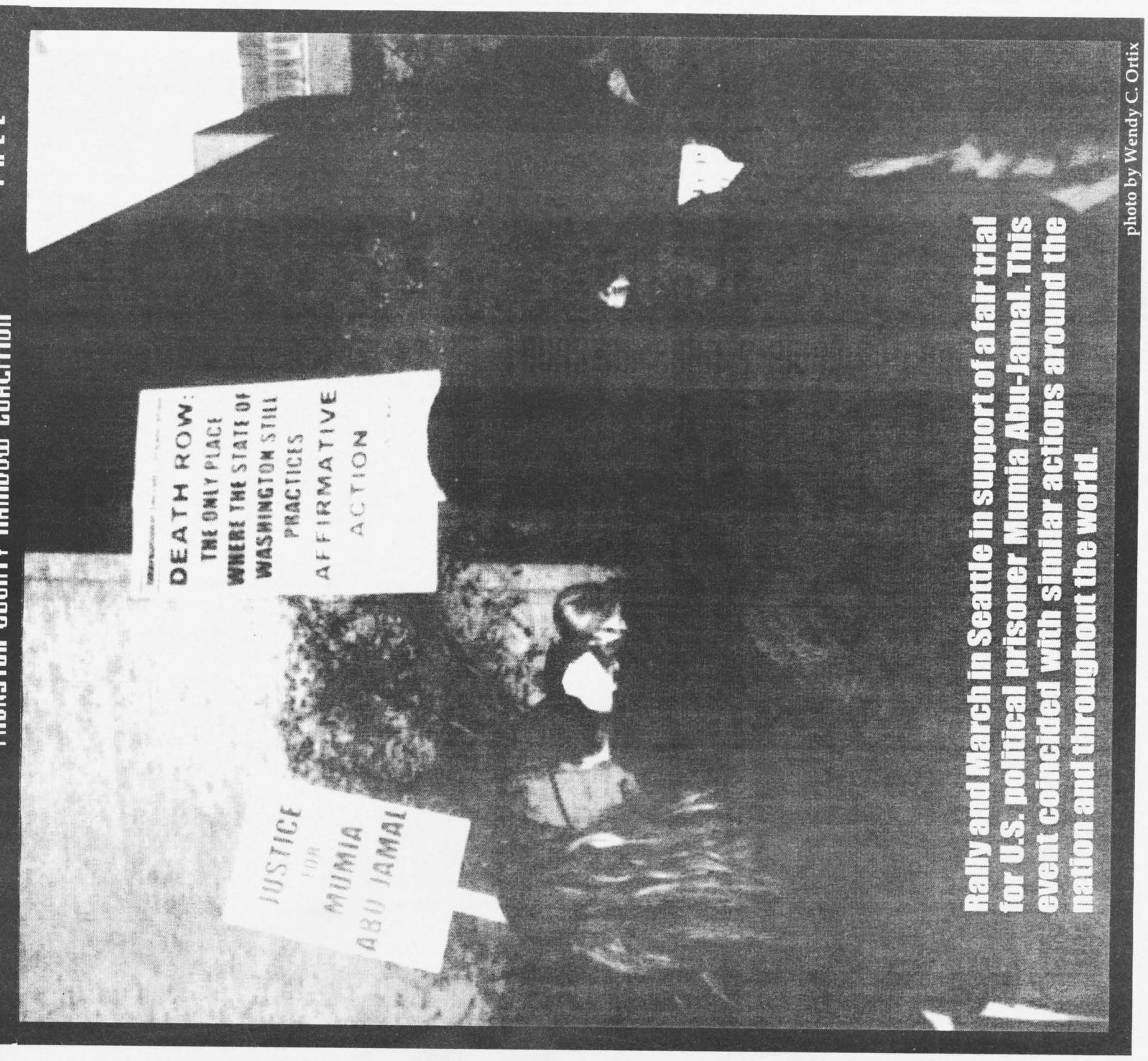
SEE PAGE 2

WORKS IN PROGRESS

THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

DECEMBER 1998

FREE



Rally and March in Seattle in support of a fair trial for U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. This event coincided with similar actions around the nation and throughout the world.

photo by Wendy C. Ortix

1

Support Striking Kaiser Steel Workers & A Plea From *WIP*

4

Along the Color Line
George Padmore: Black Revolutionary

6+7

Stop Sweatshops & Nordstrom Campaign

8+9

The Case Of Mumia Abu-Jamal & Mumia Display Poster

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Women In Prison

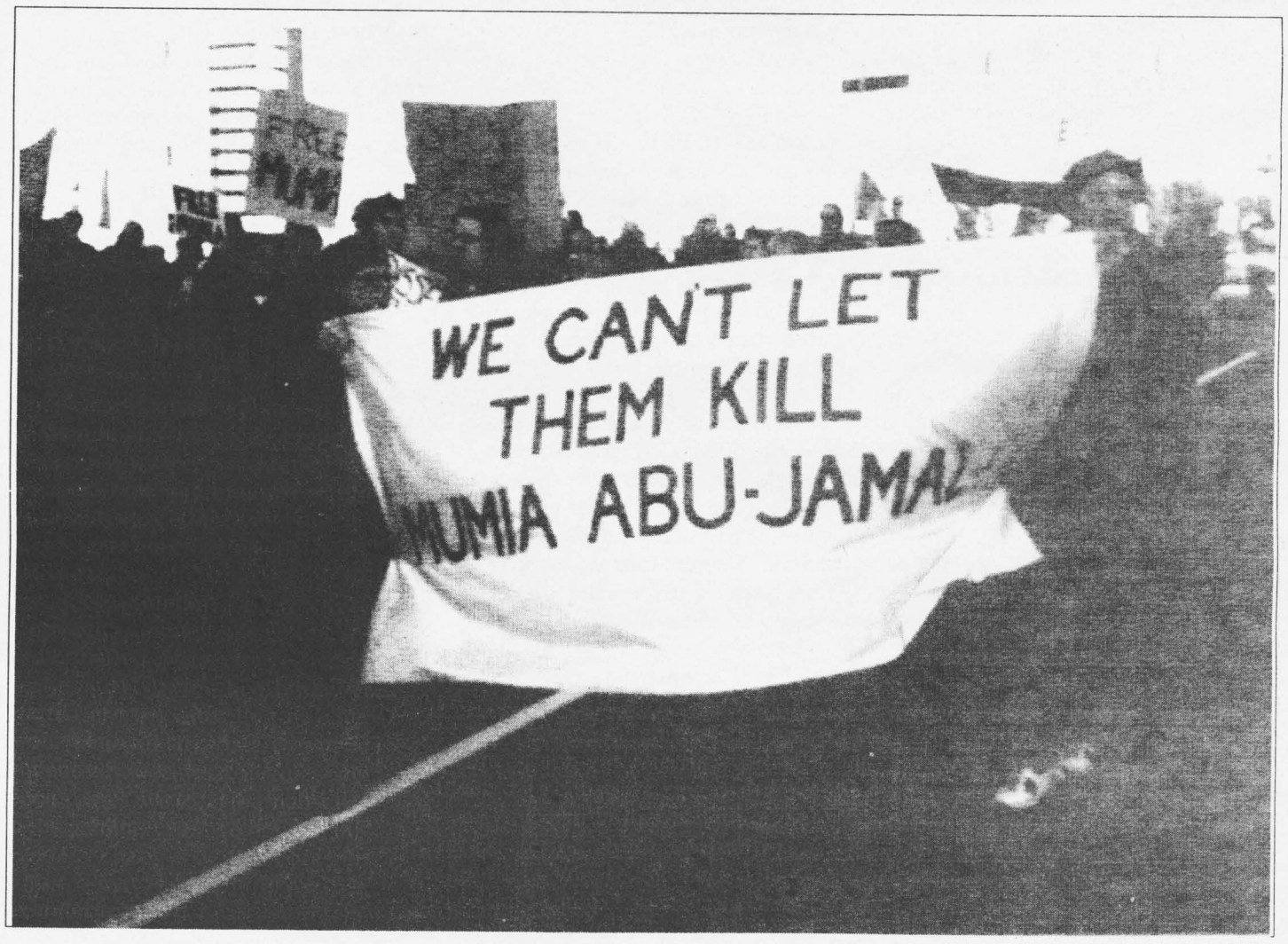

photo by hali panneton

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